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Athiya Shetty Basks In The Udaipur Sun

PLANET POSITIVE
The Ziro Music Festival Strikes A Green Chord

VINTAGE WEEKEND
'Dirty Dancing' And More In Virginia

ISSN 2455-3409
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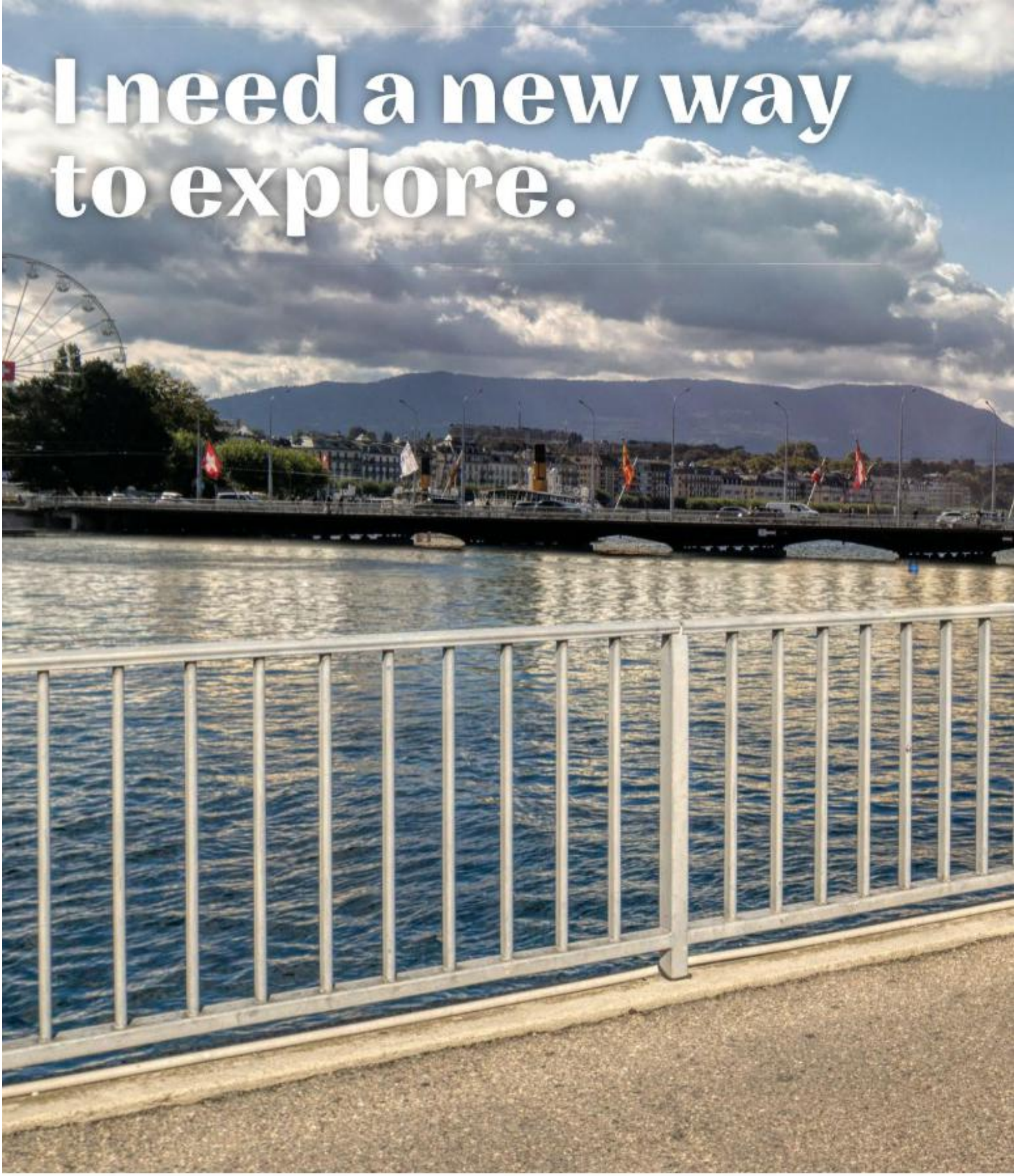
VISIT…



Geneva has it all from attractions like Jet d'eau, St. Peter's Cathedral, Old town, to the best of shops, art & culture all in a compact city centre which can be explored by walking, e-tuk tuk or even running tours. **MySwitzeraland.com/Geneva**

Switzerland.
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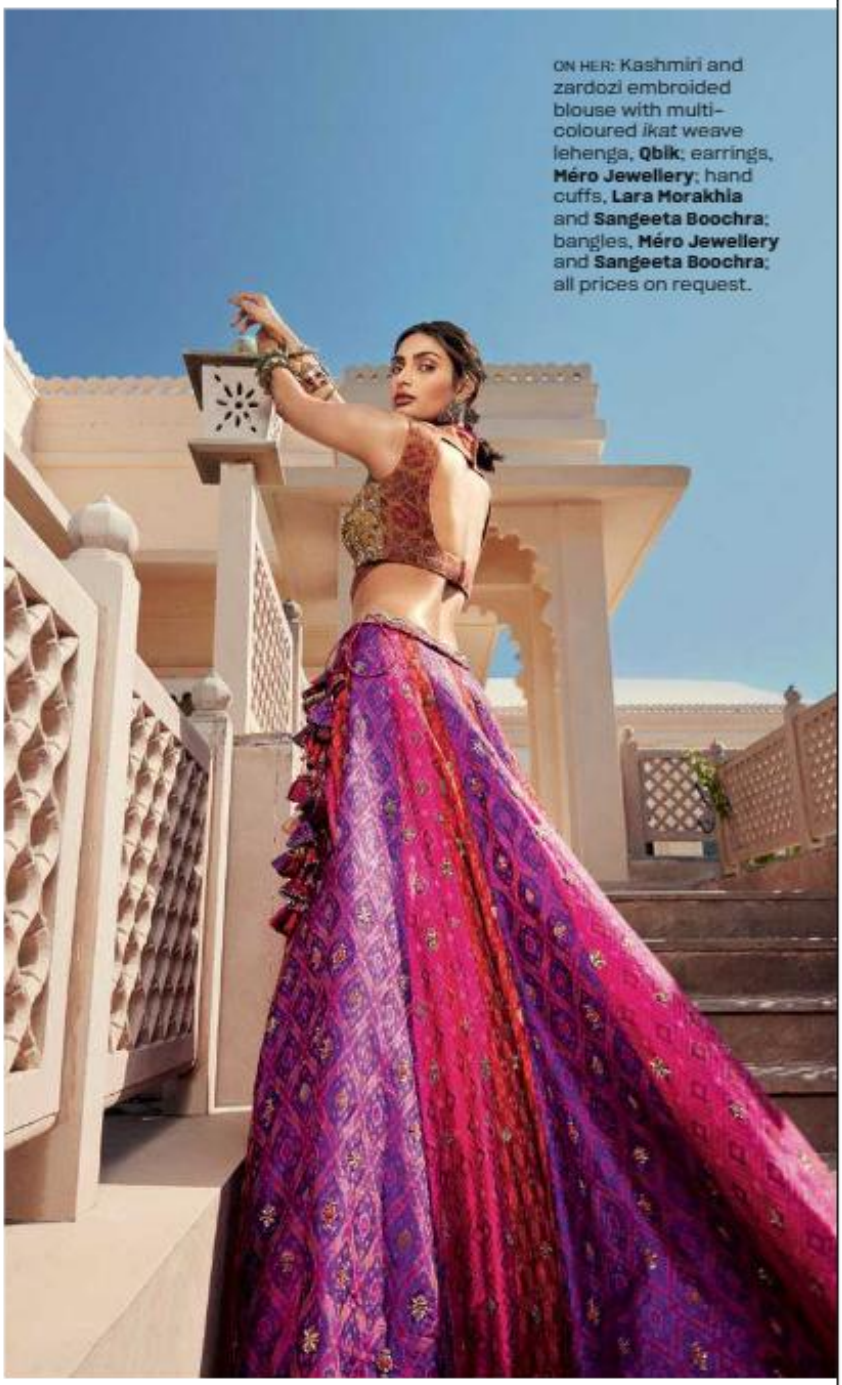

ON HER: Kashmiri and zardozi embroided blouse with multi-coloured *ikat* weave lehenga, **Qbik**; earrings, **Méro Jewellery**; hand cuffs, **Lara Morakhia** and **Sangeeta Boochra**; bangles, **Méro Jewellery** and **Sangeeta Boochra**; all prices on request.

▲ *Cover star Athiya Shetty looks elegant at Trident, Udaipur (p. 40).*

ON THE COVER:
Athiya Shetty at Trident, Udaipur.

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LETTER *from the Editor*

FROM IBA 2022
Captured at the Hatta photo booth at India's Best Awards 2022.

OUR DECEMBER ISSUE is extra special. For the first time this year, we have a flip issue celebrating two very diverse aspects of travel. One half of the magazine presents all the winners from the 11th edition of the readers' choice *Travel + Leisure* India's Best Awards 2022, and T+L Champions who beat all odds to drive their passion and belief. They are an inspiration to many and true to *T+L India & South Asia*'s motto of #GoingPlaceswithPeople. The other half of the magazine rejoices in the spirit of the season.

With the wedding season in full swing, we take Athiya Shetty to one of the most popular wedding destinations in India —Udaipur—where she plays the role of a beautiful bride (*p. 40*). In our other stories, we continue our Road to Sustainability video series with chef Thomas Zacharias (*p. 18*) and Doodlage founder Kriti Tula (*p. 20*). Catch all the behind-the-scene action of T+L Masterclasses—held in Kolkata (*p. 10*) and Delhi (*p. 12*).

Our contributor gives the lowdown on the recently concluded Ziro Festival of Music in Arunachal Pradesh, known to be the most eco-conscious music festival in the country (*p. 48*); the Intelligent Traveller uncovers the lesser-known city of Roanoke in the heart of Virginia, USA (*p. 28*). Also, find out how designer Varun Bahl seeks inspiration from his travels (*p. 34*), in our Style Check section.

As the year draws to a close, and travel once again becomes a way of life, here's looking forward to 2023 where we continue to travel mindfully, and with a purpose.

Aindrila.

Aindrila Mitra
aindrila.mitra@burda.in

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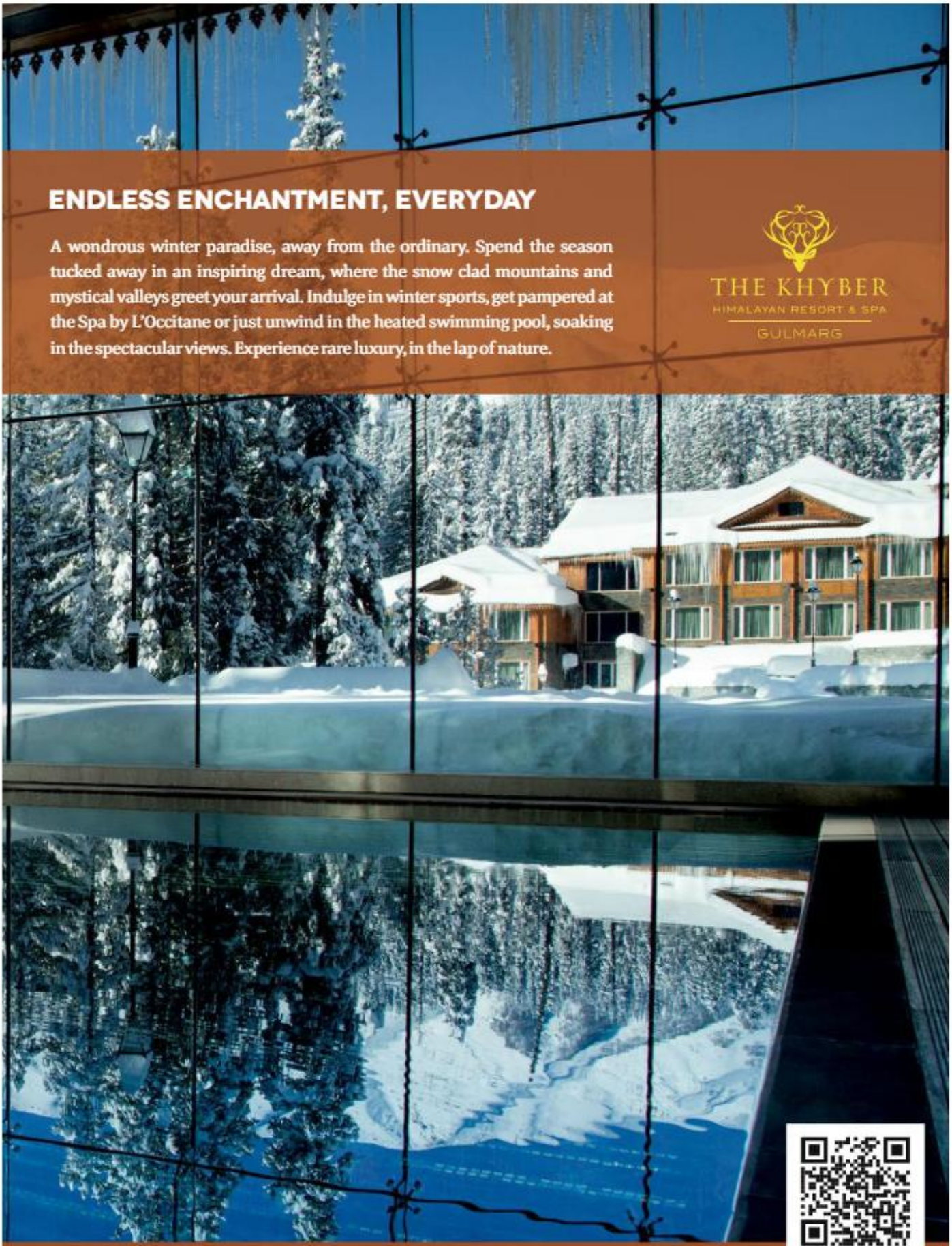

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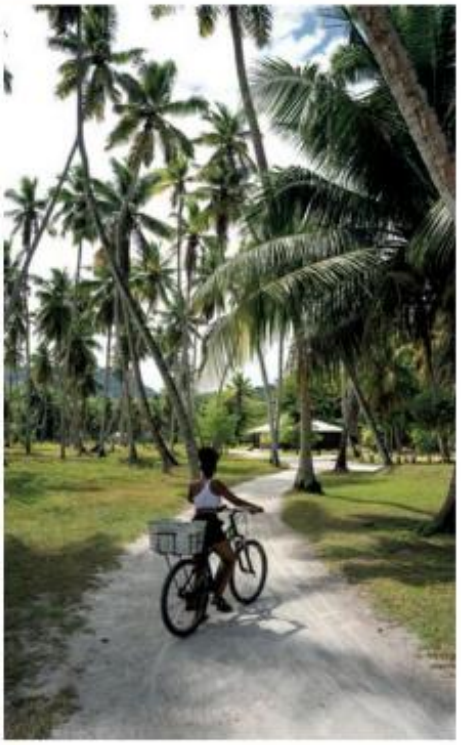

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TRAVEL+ LEISURE INDIA Masterclass

cascades AT THE POOLSIDE

MASTERCLASS IN GRILLING WITH CELEBRITY CHEF VICKY RATNANI

On October 28, 2022, team *Travel + Leisure India & South Asia* and members of ALL – Accor Live Limitless landed in the City of Joy for a Masterclass in 'Grill-o-Logy' with celebrity chef Vicky Ratnani at Novotel Kolkata. Cascades, the poolside restaurant of the hotel, was the venue for the evening exclusively for the members of ALL – Accor Live Limitless loyalty programme. Grilling alongside Ratnani was chef Neelabh Sahay, F&B Director of Novotel Kolkata. Ratnani introduced the guests to global grilling techniques with some local ingredients—on his menu were delicacies such as Grilled Sweet Potato Medallions, Grilled Naga Pineapple, and more. Chef Neelabh introduced the guests to 'modern Kolkata cuisine'. It was an evening to remember for culinary enthusiasts in Kolkata and the members of ALL – Accor Live Limitless.

ALL – Accor Live Limitless is a daily lifestyle companion. ALL harnesses and enhances the brands, services, and partnerships offered by the Accor ecosystem. ALL delivers meaningful experiences and rewards to its most engaged customers while enabling them to work, live, and play far beyond their stay, at home and around the world. Thanks to this rich value proposition, Accor is bringing its augmented hospitality strategy to life with new digital platforms, iconic partnerships (Credit Cards, Mobility, Airlines, Entertainment with AEG, IMG, Paris Saint-Germain), and a global roll-out plan for its guests and loyalty members.

Celebrity chef Vicky Ratnani introduces the Masterclass; guests watch as Ratnani grills live.

Members of ALL – Accor Live Limitless enjoy dinner by the pool; director of sales & marketing, Novotel Kolkata, Amartya Chakraborty with guests.

Chef Vicky Ratnani poses with chef Neelabh and his team at Cascades.

Celebratory pose with the entire Masterclass team.

GM of Novotel Kolkata, Arjun Kaggallu, with his team.

Corn on the cob with spicy miso glaze.

Stay updated for news on our upcoming Masterclasses on instagram.com/travelandleisureindia

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A glimpse of the beautiful interiors of AnnaMaya, Andaz Delhi.

Magandeep Singh, author and wine sommelier and Kavita Devgan, author and nutritionist.

Guests at the session included renowned food writers and influencers.

TRAVEL+ LEISURE INDIA Masterclass

AnnaMaya FOOD HALL

ANdAZ DELHI

SEASONAL INGREDIENTS AND GLOBAL FLAVOURS

On November 5, *Travel + Leisure India & South Asia* along with AnnaMaya, Andaz Delhi organised an exclusive Masterclass. Called Seasonal Delights, the masterclass had an innovative live cooking session followed by a delicious meal. The menu curated by Chef Akshay Bhardwaj featured diverse dishes with fresh and seasonal ingredients; every dish celebrated different flavours from around the world.

The culinary journey began with a cheeseboard featuring zarai, camembert, artisanal gruyere, and a selection of jams. For appetisers, Prawn Har Gao, Chicken Ccallion, Basil Chicken, Truffle Cheese Dim Sums with Aromatic Truffle Mushroom Shorba, and more were served. Inspired by the colours and flavours of the world, some of the iconic dishes in the main course included Nalli Nihari with Zaffarani Khameeri, Awadhi Murg Dum Millet Biryani, Pumpkin and Caramelised Onion Risotto, Mooli Ke Pattey Ki Sabzi with Missi Roti and Dal Moradabadi. For desserts, an assortment of sweet treats was served, including the Gur Chini Churri.

The evening saw renowned food critics, digital content creators, and gourmands come together for an afternoon of food and conversations.

Guests capture the live cooking session on their phones.

Editor-in-chief Aindrila Mitra with Rini Chaterjee.

The signature cocktail that was served at the Masterclass.

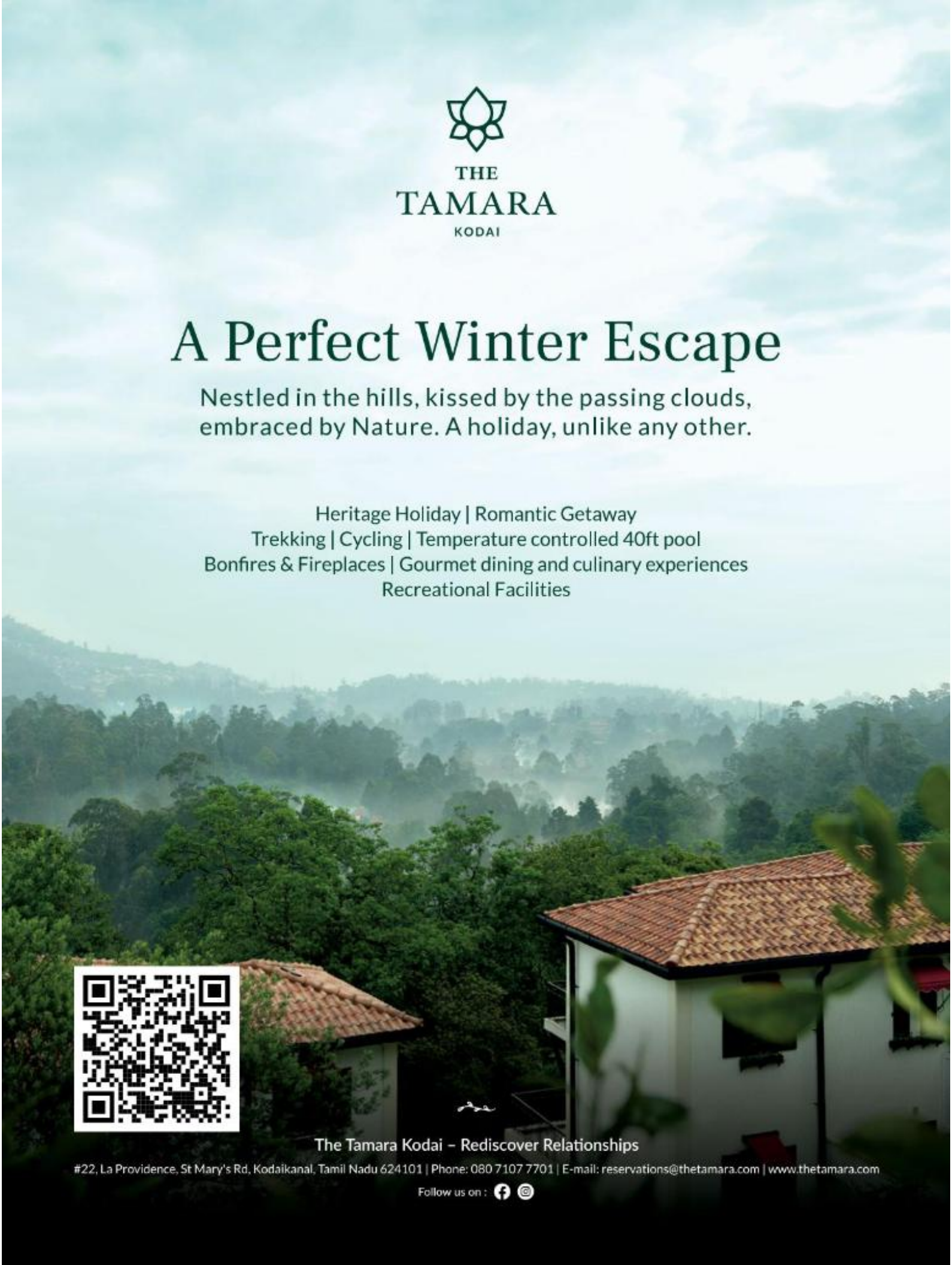
Some of the fresh and delicious dishes that were served to the guests.

L-R: Aindrila Mitra, Anum Ajani, Amarjit Bhatia, Sushmita Gupta, Ishika Laul, Sheetal Nagpal, Chirag Mohanty Samal and Sunakshi Soni.

Senior editor Chirag Mohanty Samal handing over the goodie bag to Anubhuti Krishna.

Pumpkin and Caramelised Onion Risotto.

Stay updated for news on our upcoming Masterclasses on instagram.com/travelandleisureindia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▲ *Food Exchange offers an assortment of global and local flavours. Left: The hotel has 268 rooms and suites and is ideal for business and leisure.*

Coming Soon

The wait is over. Novotel Mumbai International Airport is all set to open in the city of dreams, Mumbai.

THE BRAND-NEW Novotel Mumbai International Airport, located close to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, is all set to open its doors. The property is a perfect blend of luxury, comfort, and convenience, and provides easy access to the city's travel lifelines including the Western and Eastern Express Highways. The hotel brings distinct elements of the city together with its contemporary aesthetic and exquisite charm. Featuring 268 remarkable rooms, the hotel provides abundant personal space. The ultra-contemporary bathrooms feature a glass-enclosed rain shower, an opulent bathtub, and deluxe bath amenities. A 43-inch LED smart TV, high bandwidth Wi-Fi, a work desk with a multimedia panel, a mini fridge, and a tea/coffee maker are available across various room categories.

The meeting and event spaces here span 1,533 square metres. Harbour Room located on the lobby level, has its own private entrance. Apart from this, there are two meeting rooms on the first floor and the Grand Ballroom–Summit Room on the 11th floor.

To grab a quick bite before boarding the flight, head to Gourmet Bar or Food Exchange, where you can relish a wide assortment of global and local food and beverages. *all.accor.com* —**ROOPLEKHA DAS**

ETERNAL ELEGANCE

The Swiss watchmaking company Longines recently celebrated its 190th anniversary with three exclusive timepieces from The Longines Master Collection.

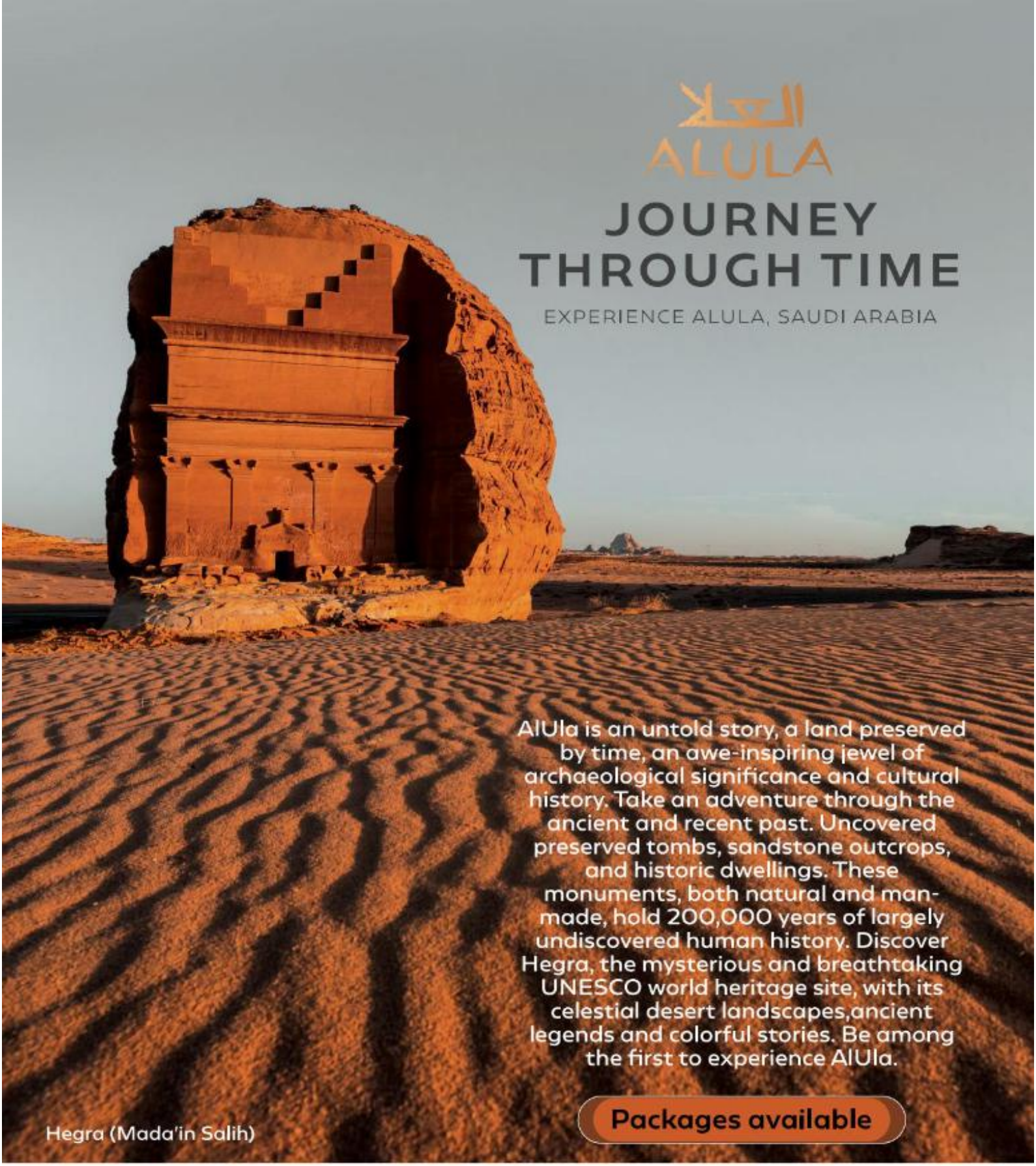
KNOWN FOR ITS deep-rooted expertise, elegance, and performance, Longines recently celebrated its 190th anniversary. The company presented a series of three exclusive timepieces from The Longines Master Collection, a line reflecting the brand's rich heritage. These exclusive watches are available in stainless steel and gold, and the 18-carat yellow gold and rose gold versions are presented in a limited, numbered edition of 190 pieces.

They also stand out with their workmanship. Think grained anthracite, brushed grey, or sandblasted silver dial with a unique finish and delicately engraved Arabic numerals. While the elegant pink, gilt, or blued steel hands mark the passing hours, minutes, and seconds, the 40mm round case with classic lines houses a Longines exclusive calibre with a silicon balance spring, guaranteeing high-precision.

The craftsmanship of the movement can be admired through the transparent back, which features a commemorative engraving. To complete the look, a soft, anthracite grey leather strap has been used. These timeless pieces not only encapsulate the brand's rich history but also its constant pursuit for excellence. *longines.com* —**SIMRRAN GILL**

▲ *Longines recently marked its 190th anniversary. Below: Comedian Amit Tandon and actress Aaditi Pohankar discuss the intricacies of a Longines Master Collection timepiece.*

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF NOVOTEL HOTELS (2); COURTESY OF LONGINES (3)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Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra is the Friendship Ambassador of Switzerland. Above: Jetboating on Lake Brienz.

Swiss Adventure

See Switzerland through the eyes of Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra who is the newly appointed Friendship Ambassador of the country.

RENOWNED FOR ITS alpine meadows and striking beauty, Switzerland has long been on the list of Indian travellers. In order to give Indian travellers a peek into what the country has on offer, Switzerland Tourism has appointed Olympic gold medalist Neeraj Chopra as its Friendship Ambassador. The sports star recently travelled to the country and experienced a customised holiday. The itinerary was tailor-made to appeal to his adventurous side and included activities such as canyon jumping, sky diving, jet boating in Interlaken, and a helicopter tour in Zermatt among other activities. It also included a trip to Geneva, where Chopra took a river rafting tour down to the iconic Lake Geneva to see the region's famous landmark, the fountain of Jet d'Eau.

"Switzerland is my favourite international holiday destination! You feel refreshed anywhere in the country whether you are out in the mountains or even just strolling in the city. But what got me excited was the chance to experience the adventurous side of the country with my closest friends. And of course, it helps to know that Switzerland is the safest place for all sorts of adventure sports!" says Chopra.

The athlete also donated his gold-winning javelin to The Olympic Museum in Lausanne, founded by the International Olympic Committee in 1993 to showcase the richness and diversity of Olympics through history, culture, design, technology, and sociology. —**SIMRRAN GILL**

The courtyard pool at Avani Chaweng Samui Hotel & Beach Club. Right: Gather the gang for a fun day at SEEN Beach Club.

TROPICAL STYLE

The latest addition to the buzzing Chaweng Beach, Avani Chaweng Samui Hotel & Beach Club brings the freewheeling spirit of the 1950s Miami to Koh Samui.

SITUATED NEARLY 10 MINUTES away from Samui Airport, Avani Chaweng Samui Hotel & Beach Club is located smack dab in the middle of Koh Samui's favourite beach. The latest addition to the buzzing Chaweng Beach, the hotel brings Miami's glamorous and freewheeling spirit of the 1950s to Koh Samui. The property is Samui's only mid-century modern-inspired beach destination and has 80 rooms and suites with balconies overlooking the courtyard pool.

Head to the sandy beaches nearby to spot a sunset, lounge at one of the snug cabanas by the pool, or simply opt for a drink at the mixology station that also doubles as a check-in area. For party lovers, the party central SEEN Beach Club Samui is just next door with top DJs and world-class entertainment.

While the resort offers snacks and tipples throughout the day, make sure to not miss the island's grooviest pool bash at SEEN Beach Club. And to end your day, sail into the sunset on a catamaran in traditional Avani style. *avanihotels.com* —**SG**

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF SWITZERLAND TOURISM (2); COURTESY OF OZEN AVANI CHAWENG SAMUI HOTEL & BEACH CLUB (2)

Clockwise from left: : An aerial view of Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa; the spacious Luxury Room at the resort; Sofitel SPA offers a comprehensive range of intensive treatments.

Joie de Vivre

A paradisal escapade awaits at Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa, a destination that blends Singapore's different cultures while paying homage to Sofitel's French origin. BY SIMRRAN GILL

Spread across 27 acres of lush greenery and refreshed by gentle breeze from the South China Sea, Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa is the definition of Joie de Vivre, with world-class amenities, service, facilities, and 211 elegant rooms, suites, and four lavish villas.

Inspired by the iconic Paris' Jardin du Luxembourg, Sofitel Singapore Sentosa Resort & Spa is home to the most beautiful park in Paris with palatial outdoor gardens and copious water features. Each Sofitel hotel draws inspiration from local culture and tradition while celebrating the French art de vivre, and the resort perfectly blends this cultural link with installations such as a life-sized bronze stallion statue symbolising the French and a majestic gold-plated Lion statue that epitomises the local culture.

Begin your day with a hearty breakfast at Kwee Zeen—baked croissants, local laksa, and house-made muesli are all served with a side of French hospitality. Be delighted by the peacocks that parade through the al fresco area while savouring a cup of fresh coffee that has been brewed to perfection.

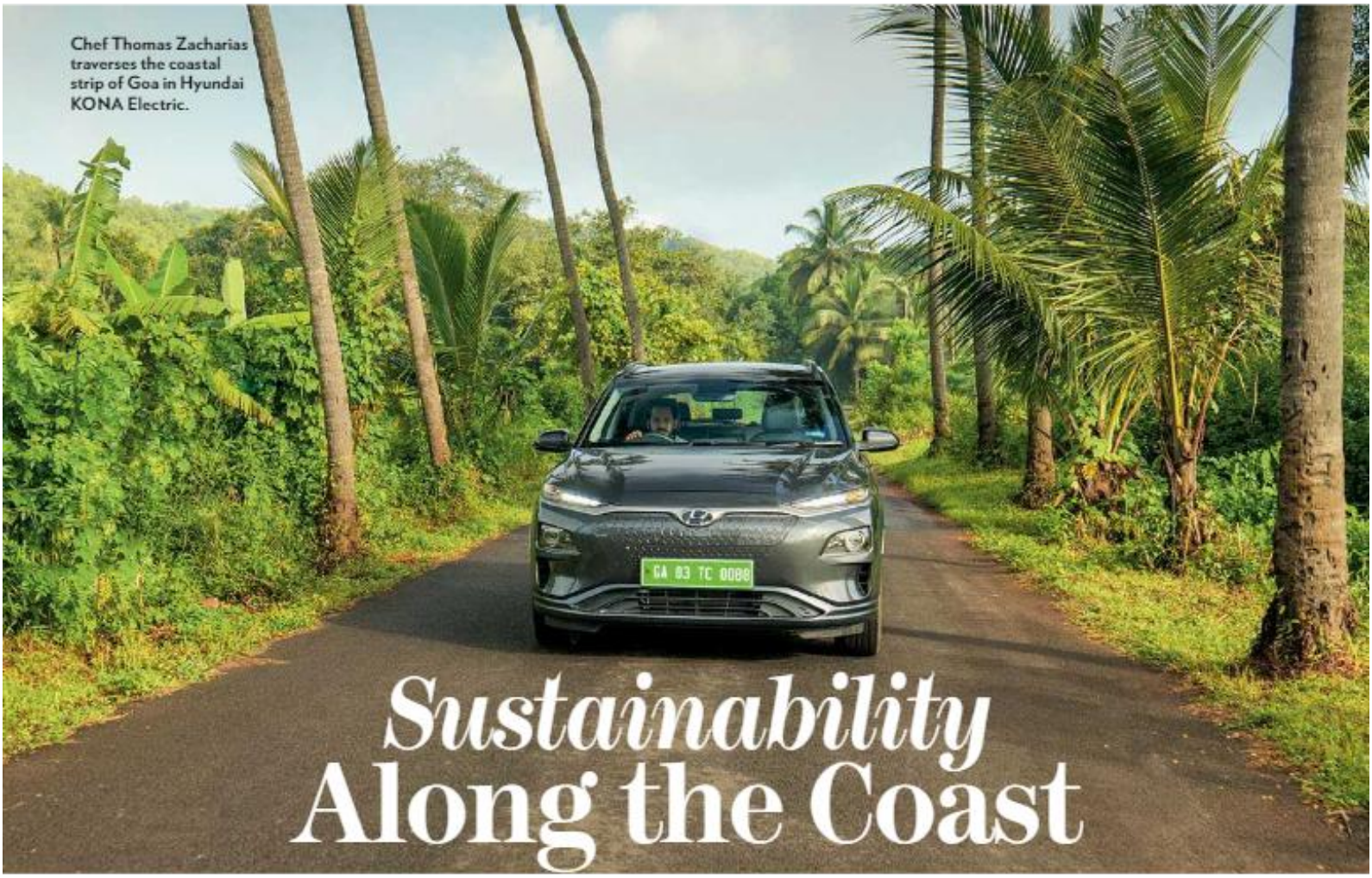
The private swimming pool at the luxurious Villa du Jardin.

As the day progresses, saunter towards LeBar, the outdoor pavilion lounge in the heart of the resort for a tranquil afternoon with friends over bespoke cocktails, dainty morsels, and indulgent high tea sets. Your afternoon will be accompanied by the view of the serene Sofitel Pool whose black pearlescent tiles glisten in the sun.

Revel in unparalleled sunset views of the South China Sea as you embark on a gastronomic journey with fresh produce and authentic Italian flavours at The Cliff. Sip on the finest wine from an impressive selection of over a 100 international labels.

Retreat to Sofitel SPA and surrender to peace with holistic treatments that revitalise the mind, body, and soul. Immerse yourself in a mindful voyage of rediscovery with all-encompassing packages curated by wellness experts and carried out by experienced therapists.

For more information, visit *sofitelsingaporesentosa.com*



Chef Thomas Zacharias traverses the coastal strip of Goa in Hyundai KONA Electric.

Sustainability Along the Coast

As clean eating and food sustainability gain prominence in the culinary scene, we discover Goa's culinary secrets on a road trip with the Hyundai KONA Electric. BY SIMRRAN GILL

Chef Thomas Zacharias has travelled across the country and discovered various ways in which food sustainability can be achieved.

Sustainability is the key word in almost every aspect of our lives nowadays, be it food, fashion, or travel. Right from the big choices to the small ones, our decisions are mostly dependent on factors like limited resources and reusability. And keeping in mind the significance of sustainable living, *Travel + Leisure India & South Asia*, in collaboration with Hyundai KONA Electric, brings Road to Sustainability, a three-part sustainable living series with thought leaders from the fields of travel, food, and lifestyle.

In part two, chef Thomas Zacharias heads to Goa in the Hyundai KONA Electric to understand sustainability and clean eating better. Zacharias begins the journey with a few important questions, "When you say sustainable, the larger question is sustainable for whom? For your carbon footprint or sustainable for the land itself? What about the people who grow our food? Or the kind of packaging that's used to transport it?"

Food and Sustainability

Our country is home to varied landscapes and with changing regions, seasons and topography, the crops we grow, the food we eat, and the agricultural rotation patterns we follow also change. But one practice that is common through all of this is sustainability. And chef Zacharias seems to be in agreement.

"In my travels across India, I've learned that no matter where I go, sustainability is so deeply rooted in our food culture and heritage, whether it is in how we've always been a country that eats locally and seasonally, how we've celebrated food

forests and multi-cropping on our farmlands, how we utilise every part of the vegetable or meat in our traditional recipes, or how we're so mindful of waste. There are many different facets of sustainability at its core."

Hyundai KONA Electric and the Quiet Coastline

For chef Zacharias, there's more to travel than just exploring and cooking. "I've travelled to 23 states to explore food. I've met people on my food exploration trips who are trying to preserve the sanctity of local ingredients and celebrate traditional practices rooted in sustainability," he shares.

And following this motto we reach Hansel Vaz's farm that taught Zacharias that Goa originally had 40 types of rice native to its soil, which over time have been lost. "Hansel grows a type of rice on his farm called Giresal rice. It's a dark red indigenous crop that is very aromatic. He went out of his way to find seeds for Giresal in the hope that he could continue to grow it and celebrate it," explains Zacharias.

Goa is very underrated destination; it struggles to come out of is 'fun destination' tag. The chef says, "People always think of it as a party destination, but Goa has an incredible landscape of beaches, fields, forests, mountains, and long winding roads that allow you to be with yourself. Here, you can actually hear yourself think."

And talking about how the Hyundai KONA Electric is aiding his journey, he says, "The Hyundai KONA Electric is quieter than my head. It can go 452 kilometres at a stretch in a single charge and you can afford enough time to drive the entire length of this state back and forth a couple of times."

Hyundai KONA Electric responds to the lightest touch and has different driving modes.

Fishing in Goa

Our next stop for the day is Miramar Beach to meet Aaron Lobo. "While spending time in Goa, I met Aaron, who told me about the Ramponker fishing community, who take out their boats about a kilometre into the ocean and fish in a traditional, less invasive manner. This doesn't destroy everything in its path like large-scale trawler fishing," says the chef.

And as we drive to our final destination, Zacharias shares how smooth his ride for the day has been. "Lucky for me, Hyundai KONA Electric has different driving modes. In the Comfort mode, the car responds to the lightest touch and the drive alongside these gorgeous views is effortless and smooth," he smiles.

Hyundai has been at the forefront of the electric mobility revolution in India and is taking experiences 'beyond mobility'. A step in the direction of intelligent technology, sustainability, and innovation, the Hyundai KONA Electric, just like chef Thomas Zacharias, highlights how sustainability is much more than what meets the eye.

"Whether it's things I do in my personal life like eating locally, composting at home, using reusable bottles and cups on my travels across the country, or picking an electric car, I'm trying to take steps to do better and be better. We never think of food as a domain for sustainability. But it is. Protecting what is already ours and integrating the practices in our current daily lives might just be the answer to our path to sustainability," concludes the chef.

The chef cooks with local ingredients in Goa.

The Ramponker fishing community casts their nets closer to the shore.

For more info, go to *hyundai.com/in*

Fashion Forward

On a road trip across Jaipur with the Hyundai KONA Electric, founder of sustainable clothing brand Doodlage, Kriti Tula talks about finding alternatives to fast fashion.

In part three of the video series 'Road to Sustainability', *Travel + Leisure India & South Asia* in collaboration with Hyundai KONA Electric traverse the roads of Delhi and Jaipur with Kriti Tula who runs her own sustainable fashion label—Doodlage—with co-founder Paras Arora. As we marvel at her studio in Delhi, she begins a conversation about sustainability. "There's a conscious effort in the fashion industry to keep us in the dark about what mass production is doing to the environment," says Tula. "Slow fashion is a need, not just an alternative. When I was growing up, it was just a way of life—good quality clothes that would last you years. That's what I've spent my career building—an ecosystem where clothes are made from the stuff they called 'waste' in the fashion industry," she adds.

Slow Vs Sustainable

Before we understand the world of sustainable fashion, Tula helps us navigate the basic difference between slow and sustainable fashion, the two words that are often used interchangeably but are two varying concepts. "People often confuse slow fashion with sustainable fashion. The key difference is that slow fashion is about getting the most amount of use out of garments that already exist. Sustainable fashion is when garments are made ethically, from fabric that was made for that purpose. It's a better balance between people, planet, and profits," she says.

Tula and Arora's brand, Doodlage, is known for making garments from fabric that would otherwise be dumped. The duo creates their products from upcycled or recycled material to give their consumers sustainable wear.

Highlighting some basic facts about slow fashion, Tula says, "Every year, 342 million oil barrels are used for making polyester for the fashion industry. And when those clothes are discarded, they cannot be recycled. The whole world sends its garment waste to India to recycle, and this has been happening for decades. So, we know how to recycle, but we don't have a collection system."

Talking about being a responsible consumer, she says, "India has become the sixth largest consumer of goods in the world. I often think about how sustainability is about personal responsibility. At a micro level, we should take small steps. For instance, simply swapping clothes with friends, or even buying two value pieces instead of the 10 pieces online. The older clothes can be repurposed or reused, and you save on time, space, and money because higher quality pieces last you longer."

On the Road with Hyundai KONA Electric

Talking about her journey to Jaipur with the Hyundai KONA Electric, Tula says, "Thanks to the trip, I got a chance to take the Hyundai KONA Electric out for a spin."

Clockwise from above: Kriti Tula in the Hyundai KONA Electric; Tula is the co-founder of Doodlage, a sustainable clothing brand; Tula opts for the Hyundai KONA Electric, a sustainable alternative for her travels.

Highlighting the similarities between Hyundai and Doodlage, Tula iterates, "Hyundai is doing some great work to offer alternatives to people who want to be mindful of what they're leaving behind. They have recognised that work needs to be done. They're encouraging people to pick a greener path to sustainability, which aligns with my work at Doodlage."

She further explains, "I wanted to work with people who feel the same way. I kept waiting for a brand that gave me a sustainable alternative. When that didn't happen, I decided I just do it myself. With Hyundai, I get a chance to open up this conversation to a much larger audience. Their medium is technology, while mine is fabric. They've spent time and energy where they've said–what can we do to reduce our carbon footprint? Take the Eco mode of the Hyundai KONA Electric [for example] that saves energy while you're driving, especially when you're driving through peak traffic in Delhi."

Before parting for the day, Tula shares some steps that we can inculcate in our daily life to adopt a sustainable approach towards fashion. "You can start with simple steps, like learning about the brand and the material you are wearing and shopping for garments you will wear for longer. I love clothes just as much as the next person, but I want to be part of the solution. How can I minimise the waste I create and maximise use of products that already exist? It is these small steps that make a big difference."

Away From The World

Journey to the North Pole aboard the world's first luxury icebreaking cruise ship from PONANT, Le Commandant Charcot.

The North Pole has continued to fascinate the mankind since the dawn of time. And now travellers have an opportunity to unearth the secrets of this mystical land with PONANT. The French cruise ship operator has written the next chapter in the saga of polar exploration with the world's first luxury ice breaker, Le Commandant Charcot.

The ship will follow in the footsteps of explorers who once tried reaching these elusive parts, nearly 700 kilometres from any land. The journey will begin at Spitsbergen, from there you will sail the northern waters at the edges of the Earth, where the landscapes change constantly according to ice and plays of light. The journey will further continue until you reach the grail of all polar explorers. Swept by winds and currents, the ice floe here is constantly drifting, and it requires great expertise to manoeuvre carefully to reach the northern most point on our planet. While here, keep an eye out for the abundant wildlife that inhabits the area, including Arctic foxes, seals, whales, and

Clockwise from above: An Arctic Zodiac is an inflatable boat used in expeditions for safaris and landing on remote locations; Le Commandant Charcoat is the world's first luxury icebreaking cruise ship from PONANT; the expedition has activities such as snowshoeing and polar diving.

polar bears. A symbol of the Arctic region, the polar bear is one of the largest of its species on Earth. What really sets it apart is its ability to adapt to its environment and the sea. They are well-equipped to cope with extreme temperatures, as, beneath their black skin—which absorbs the sun's energy through their fur—lies a layer of fat that can be more than 10 centimetres thick. Together the fat and fur provide an excellent level of buoyance, enabling them to stay on the surface of the water without effort.

While the journey itself is extremely exciting, there is so much more one can avail on board. Depending on the destination, travellers can meet indigenous communities of the Arctic, observe wildlife, visit nature reserves, and participate in activities such as dog sledding, kayaking, hiking, ice fishing, and polar diving. Not only this, but the ship will also have a team

of 16 experienced expedition leaders and naturalists who will host informative lectures onboard along with guided zodiac safaris and landings ashore.

PONANT's Le Commandant Charcot has also kept the environment in mind. The ship is powered by liquified natural gas and battery in order to protect these remote lands and practice conservation tourism and responsible and sustainable sailing.

The 16-day Geographical North Pole Expedition, departing from Spitsbergen on August 26, 2023, is currently priced from ₹22,30,727 (per person, twin sharing basis). And for those travelling solo, advantage of the Free Solo supplement on the July 10, 2023 Exploration Voyage can also be availed.

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Travel+Leisure India & South Asia's December cover star Athiya Shetty swears by Philips Easy Touch Garment Steamer.

The Modern Bride's Best Ally

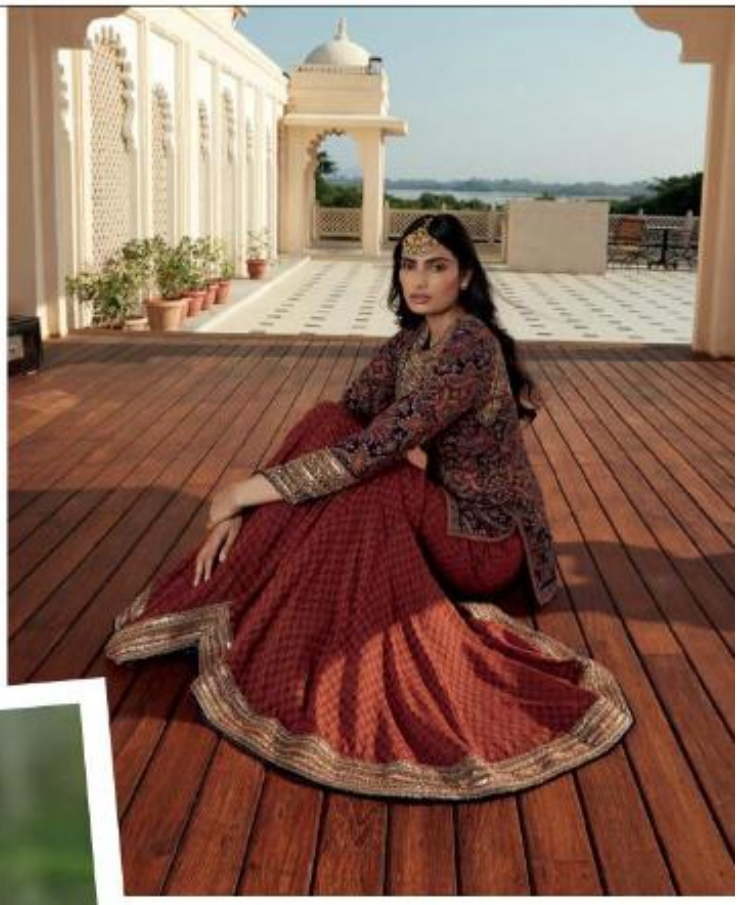
Bid adieu to creases with the Philips Easy Touch Garment Steamer, the best friend of every bride-to-be. BY ROOPLEKHA DAS

The steamer easily de-wrinkles even intricately designed ethnic or formal-wear.

Modern bridal dreams are composed of stylish, chic, dynamic, yet simple ensembles. Be it your pastel-coloured lehengas or traditional red heirlooms, these prized possessions can be difficult to handle on your big day. However, the Philips Easy Touch Garment Steamer can make it a breeze to smoothen out the last minute creases and wrinkles on your bridal wear. *Travel + Leisure India and South Asia*'s cover star Athiya Shetty who plays a modern bride for the cover shoot of this issue, agrees. She tells us how to easily de-wrinkle the attire while getting ready.

LOOK YOUR BEST WITH LEAST EFFORTS

A wedding calls for fervent planning and execution. Your crumpled clothes needn't be one of your worries when you have a lot on your plate. However, this is a reality



Clockwise from top: The adjustable double poles allow better stability and come withy various height settings; Athiya Shetty poses for the cover shoot in a perfectly steamed attire; Philips EasyTouch Plus Garment Steamer comes with a sizable steam plate that gives you the ability to cover more fabric surfaces.

we can't escape. However, thanks to the state-of-the-art, versatile Philips Easy Touch Garment steamer that has made erasing the creases an easy task for any bride-to-be. The steamer easily de-wrinkles even intricately designed ethnic or formal-wear with its powerful 1600W wattage and continuous steam delivery of up to 32g. The adjustable double poles allow better stability and come withy various height settings. This feature makes it easier to hang garments like gowns, lehengas, and kurta and iron them on the go.

WORKS ON ANY FABRIC

Be it your premium bridal wedding outfits curated with fabrics like brocade, silk, zari, or crepe with intricate embroideries, a fascinating bridesmaid gown, or a beautiful silk kurta set, ironing can take away the glitz and end up damaging the delicate fabric, embellishments, and exquisite zardozi thread work. The Philips EasyTouch Plus Garment Steamer, on the contrary, is safe for all kinds of fabrics, unlike the traditional iron. It comes with a no-burns guarantee that will keep your heirloom outfits safe and looking good. It comes with a sizable steam plate that gives you the ability to cover more fabric surfaces during steaming sessions. It eliminates creases from every area of your outfits without destroying their charm and elegance with its powerful steam iron.

THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS

Amidst the celebrations, it's easy to overlook that the wedding dress has been hanging in the same spot in the wardrobe for weeks. So, before your nuptials, one needs to ensure that the outfit is fresh and fragrant. During such frantic times, this steamer saves the day for the bride. It emits steam that eliminates bacteria and makes your clothes smell good. If you have any last-minute ideas, the insulation glove provides extra protection while steaming in a hurry. It is a multifaceted steamer with five different steam settings, a fabric brush that aids in the penetration and smoothing of heavy garments, a pleat maker for crisp folds, and a support attachment that provides outstanding results with minimal effort so that you can have the best of both worlds—safety and style.

Shetty says, "It's important that you have the right product that will help you to get ready without the hassle of having to send it for ironing outside every single time. Which is why I can vouch for this product." She adds, "You gotta have all the options, right?!"

Nothing, after all, brings back a joyful memory like walking down the aisle in a lovely wedding attire!

For more information, visit *philips.co.in*

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The Ritz-Carlton, Doha offers 374 luxury rooms and suites with views of the city or Arabian Gulf.

Sensorial Journey

Local Qatari hospitality meets culinary excellence at The Ritz-Carlton, Doha, an ideal destination for those looking to bask in luxury.

LOCATED ON AN exclusive stretch of sandy beach within the city, The Ritz-Carlton, Doha rises above the Marina and commands sweeping views of the Arabian Gulf, iconic Pearl, and Lusail City. Known for its superior service culture, the hotel creates a benchmark for luxury addresses.

From henna parties to bridal showers to weddings, the hotel is a one-stop destination for customised events. Think speciality linen, floral arrangements, base plates, and welcome baskets, all with a personal touch. The hotel also hosted the first Indian wedding in the city of Doha.

Moving on to its culinary offerings, the hotel boasts seven restaurants and lounges, each helmed by talented chefs. At B-Lounge, which is a part of the international Buddha Bar brand, treat your tastebuds to Asian fusion dishes against a backdrop of marina-side views and inventive soundtracks. At the bistro-style Sel & Miel, you can savour outstanding French cuisine in the garden overlooking the marina. Offering a contemporary twist on the traditional American steakhouse concept is STK Doha that is notable for its lively atmosphere, edgy feel, and incomparable cuts. The menu here has been crafted for a range of palates with a choice of international meat-free, plant-based dishes, seafood, and indulgent desserts. And for some social downtime, Lobby Lounge is apt. Located in the heart of the hotel, it's the ideal spot for delicious pastries, light bites, and signature afternoon tea.

B-Lounge serves Asian fusion dishes against the backdrop of the marina.

The outdoor pool at the resort.

Additional offerings at the property include air-conditioned indoor squash court, tennis courts and gym, a junior-sized Olympic pool, freeform beach front pool, and The Ritz-Carlton Spa, Doha that offers a range of restorative treatments that pay homage to Qatar's heritage.

The Ritz-Carlton, Doha is well-suited for both business as well as leisure travellers and bridges the past with the present to create a multicultural experience. *ritzcarlton.com*

—SIMRRAN GILL

COURTESY OF THE RITZ-CARLTON DOHA

Clockwise from left: Paella is a rice dish originally from Valencia; Torta del Casar is a cheese made from sheep's milk; Pintxos is a version of tapas, popular in cities like Bilbao and San Sebastian.

Savouring Spain

From tortillas and gazpachos to paellas and great wines, there is a culinary treasure trove waiting to be discovered in Spain. **BY BAYAR JAIN**

THE DELECTABLE DISHES of Spain have been a key tourism draw. For Indians, culinary trips to the European nation bring back familiar flavours. Like saffron, for instance. While this spice originated in India, Spanish cooks have adopted its flavours in rice dishes, stews, meat, and even desserts. This spice is now also grown in parts of Spain, mainly Castilla-La Mancha.

Paprika, too, can be found in many traditional Spanish foods like *chorizo, sobrasada,* and other sausages. Garlic, tomatoes, and onions—the classic ingredients of *sofrito*—are also a common link between the nations. A quintessential Spanish dish, however, is *paella valenciana*, which originates in Valencia. This rice dish has such immense global appeal that a day has been set aside in its honour.

On World Paella Day (September 20), Valencians share and celebrate, beyond recipes and ingredients, the internationality of the *paella*. For the Spaniards, enjoying a plate of *paella* with their loved ones over conversations is as important as the dish itself. Apart from paying homage to the universality of Spanish gastronomy, this day also hopes to bring citizens from all around the world together with the love for this dish. Similarly, World Tapas Day (observed annually on the third Thursday of June) is an ode to the small Spanish Tapa dish that accompanies drinks.

Gazpacho from Andalucia is a cold soup and drink made of raw, blended vegetables.

Consider pairing *tapas* with drinks such as *sangria*, *tinto de verano* and *rebujito*. Teetotallers can enjoy *mosto*, a non-alcoholic drink made from grapes; *cafe con hielo*, Spain's version of an iced espresso; or the *granizado* (shaved ice).

A lesser-known offering of Spanish cuisine is its cheese. In fact, Spain is home to *cabrales*, a blue cheese from Asturias; the *quesada* or Pasiega cheesecake from the country's northern side; cheese-makers in Lanzarote; and even a dedicated cheese route in Extremadura where Torta del Casar cheese can be sampled.

Many are also unaware of Spain's vegetarian side. Non meat-eaters can savour vegetarian classics like *marjocan vegetable soup* or *tortillas* made with chickpea flour and water. Spaniards, being generally very warm and welcoming, also convert meat-heavy classics to vegetarian delights upon request. In short, Spain has it all for a culinary trip unlike any other! *spain.info*

COURTESY OF SPAIN TOURISM

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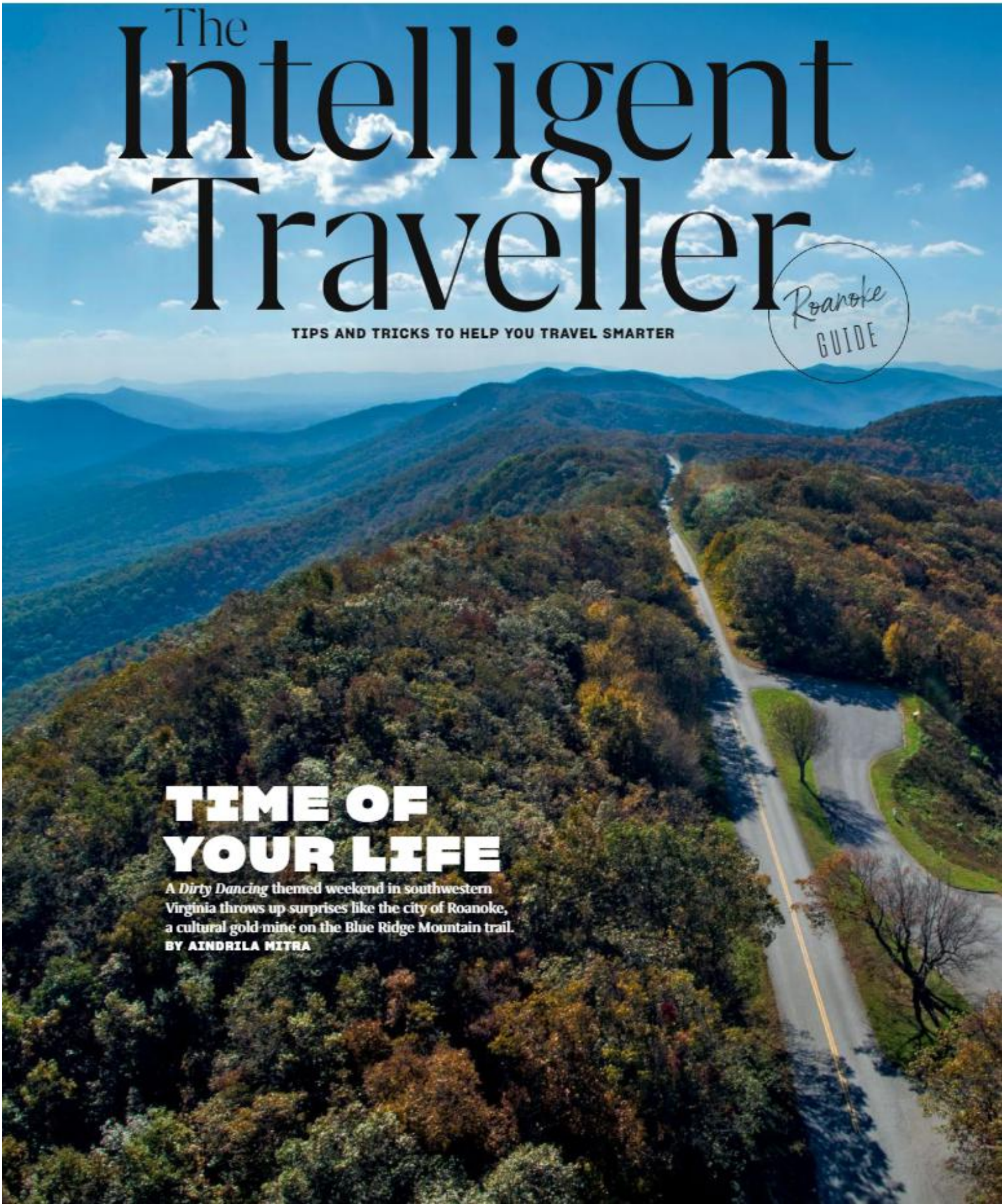
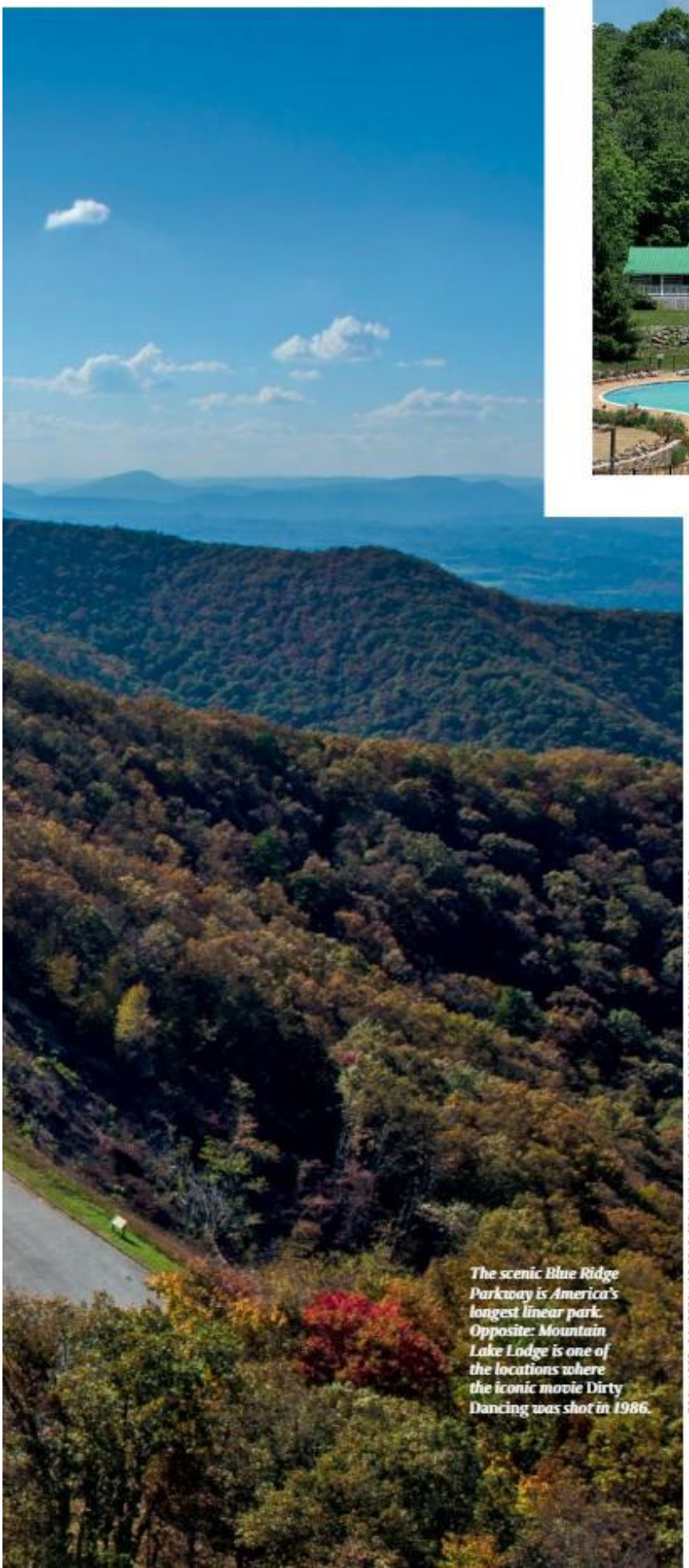
Roanoke GUIDE



TIME OF YOUR LIFE

A *Dirty Dancing* themed weekend in southwestern Virginia throws up surprises like the city of Roanoke, a cultural gold mine on the Blue Ridge Mountain trail.

BY AINDRILA MITRA

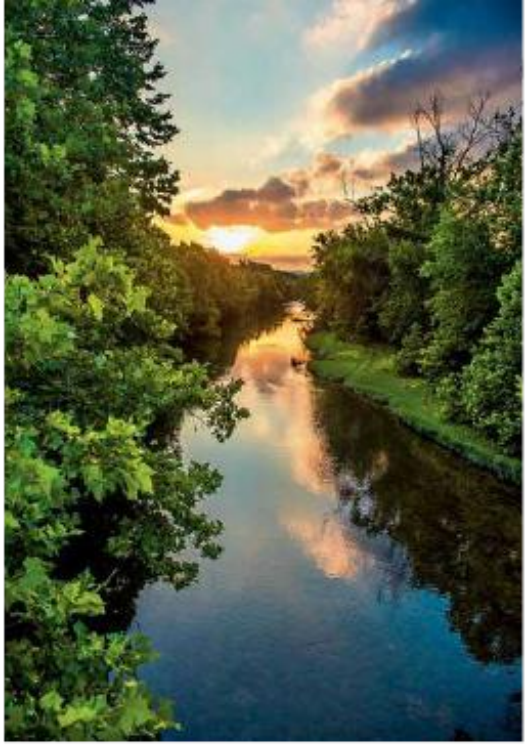


The scenic Blue Ridge Parkway is America's longest linear park. Opposite: Mountain Lake Lodge is one of the locations where the iconic movie Dirty Dancing *was shot in 1986.*

FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF STAR CITY BHYGAMS-VISIT VBR; COURTESY OF MOUNTAIN LAKE LODGE

'WHERE IS THIS PLACE?' my well-travelled friend asks me when I tell him I'm off to Roanoke. "It's in Virginia, USA," I explain. "A part of the Blue Mountain Ridge Trail." His reaction is common despite this gem of a city being only a 30-minute flight from Washington's Dulles International Airport and a scenic four-hour drive from DC. It's a bright day when I land at the airport to be welcomed by Christi Braginton from Virginia Tourism. I am here for the 35th anniversary celebrations of *Dirty Dancing*, the iconic '80s movie starring Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey that pops up every time I am surfing channels. I've watched it about half a dozen times through the years!

We drive up to **Mountain Lake Lodge** (*mtnlakelodge.com*) in Pembroke, about an hour's drive from Roanoke, to celebrate the weekend with *Dirty Dancing* fans. It is one of locations where the movie was shot in 1986. Mountain Lake Lodge served as The Kellerman Resort. I am checked into the main restored lodge, and my room overlooks the resort's now extensive pool and chilling zones. I meet Heidi Stone, the general manager of Mountain Lake Lodge for what turns out to be a rather quick tour of the property set in the middle of a 2,600-acre nature preserve and surrounded by Appalachian Mountains. "The property was owned by Mary Moody. She spent her summers here," explains Stone, adding, "When she died in 1986, she left the property to The Mary Moody Northen Endowment, which currently owns and runs the resort." Over the last decade, Stone and her



Roanoke River Greenway is a regional project and is frequented by many for day hiking.

team have been rebuilding the "culture, dining, activities, and focussing on the assets." Today, Mountain Lake Lodge has a total of 100 rooming units, half of which are hotel rooms, and the other half are two-, three-, and four-bedroom cottages, with a capacity of 350 people. There are approximately six special *Dirty Dancing* weekend celebrations through the year (the first was held in 1988). When I check in on an August weekend, the property is at 100 per cent capacity.

From special *Dirty Dancing*-themed fancy dress to trivia and games, the weekend passes in fun and humour. It's a gathering of multi-generation travellers united by a single thread—love for the film. Stone reveals that a sequel with Jennifer Grey is scheduled to be shot here next spring and slotted to release on February 9, 2024.

The meals prepared by executive chef Michael Porterfield (also called Mike) are typically American and consist of stews, mashed potatoes, pies, salads, and breads. But the hero dish is the pot roast vegetables—something Mike also served during the filming. "Patrick was a really nice guy, he'd come and have beer with us," he reminisces.

With my brand-new *Dirty Dancing* merchandise, I set out for Roanoke—a hidden gem on the Blue Ridge Mountain trail. "Roanoke was once a popular refugee resettlement area," reveals Kathryn Lucas, the public relations manager for Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge. I get a sense of it in Downtown Roanoke—the crowd is a mix of multiple races. I walk into a boutique called **She's International** (*shesinternationalboutique.com*) and meet Diane Speaks, the owner and a former flight attendant with US Airways, who settled in Roanoke 46 years ago. My eyes fall on an earring made by an Indian designer, trinkets from Turkey, and fashion from Croatia and Greece for full-bodied women. So, what keeps her in Roanoke, having travelled the world for 33 years as a flight attendant, I ask. "Roanoke is lovely," she tells me, "It's affordable, beautiful, people are great, the mountains are gorgeous, and the weather doesn't get terrible. There's a lot to do here if you really want to."

I stop by **Taubman Museum of Art** (*taubmanmuseum.org*), a seven-minute walk from where I stay—**The Liberty Trust** (*libertytrusthotel.com*). The Liberty Trust building was originally the First National Bank in Roanoke, which facilitated the commercial transactions of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, and first opened in 1910. In 1926, the bank merged with the National Exchange Bank, and the building was sold to the Liberty Trust. In the years that followed, the Liberty Trust property got recognised as one of the best-appointed Edwardian era bank buildings in Virginia.

The Taubman Museum is fascinating—architect Randall Stout honours naturalistic elements of Roanoke with the 23-metre glass peak in the atrium recalling the Roanoke Star, and the undulating roofline reflecting the Blue Ridge Mountains. When I visit, there's a beautiful installation of deconstructed Broadway outfits. I am taken with the Cynthia and

GETTING THERE

The easiest way to get to Roanoke is to fly into Dulles International Airport in Washington, and then take a connecting flight to Roanoke. Alternatively, you can also drive down to Roanoke, which approximately takes four hours. Multiple airlines including the **Emirates** *(emirates.com)* and **United Airlines** *(united.com)* fly from major Indian cities to Washington.

STAY

The *Dirty Dancing* Weekend takes place at the Mountain Lake Lodge in Pembroke, and there are only six of these special weekend celebrations in a year. Advance booking is recommended. The schedule for 2023 is available and one can pre book. The dates are: April 28–30, June 23–25, July 28–30, August 25–27, September. 15–17, October. 27–29, 2023. *mtnlakelodge.com*

The Liberty Trust Hotel is conveniently located in the heart of Downtown Roanoke. The boutique property has 54 luxurious guest rooms with modern amenities. *libertytrusthotel.com*.

The other option is **The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Curio Collection by Hilton**—a conserved Tudor-style hotel originally built in 1882. *hilton.com*

1882 Lobby Bar at The Hotel Roanoke & Conference Center, Curio Collection by Hilton, serves pre-prohibition cocktails paired with modern-day mixology.

FROM TOP: COURTESY OF JENNIFER GRIFFIN-VISIT VBR; COURTESY OF HOTEL ROANOKE-VISIT VBR

Taubman Museum of Art lies in the heart of Downtown Roanoke, and is one of the largest repositories of Leiber bags in America. Below, from left: Black Dog Salvage houses vintage furniture; Texas Tavern is a family owned diner famous for its hotdogs and chili.

Heywood Fralin collection until I stumble upon the customised exhibit of Judith Leiber: *Earthly Delights*. The Taubman Museum of Art is one of the largest repositories of Leiber bags in America. The day ends on a high note after some games at **Roanoke Pinball Museum** (*roanokepinball.org*) followed by dinner at **Bloom** (*bloomrke.com*). Opened by chef Nate Sloan in July 2019, the restaurant serves the most unique corn dishes, including a corn parfait—a delight for vegetarians.

Mornings in Roanoke are quiet and pleasant. I walk through the Farmer's Market in Downtown (primarily a weekend market) and take a stroll through Elmwood Park to build an appetite. Then, I head to one of the most popular eateries in Roanoke, **Scratch Biscuit Co.** (*scratchbiscuit.com*), where I dig into a freshly made country ham biscuit with green gold iced coffee. It's not too heavy, scores high on freshness, and the meat is all too delicious. With breakfast done, I head to the home of the TV series *Salvage Dawgs*. **Black Dog Salvage** (*blackdogsalvage.com*)—a treasure trove of American history and all things vintage was started in 1999 by ex-navy men, Mike and Robert. Today the salvage store spans 4,088 square metres and houses vintage doors, doorknobs, sinks, beds, furniture paint, and more. The adjacent **Stone House** (*blackdogsalvage.com/thestonehouse*) of Black Dog Salvage, a restored stone house from circa 1911, now available to book on Airbnb, is also a good option for a family stay in this part of Roanoke.

For dinner, Kathryn Lucas takes me to the joint once frequented by Elvis Presley, Rod Stewart, and Kevin Costner among others. **Texas Tavern** (*texastavern-inc.com*) was founded by Issac (Nick) Bullington in February 1930. The 'World Famous Chile' recipe that the establishment has been serving since then originally came from a hotel in Texas. Matt Bullington, the fourth-generation owner says, "The shop is exactly what it was like in the 1930s. Its [become] part of the fabric of Roanoke, and we take that seriously."

On our way to the **Roanoke Star** sitting atop Mill Mountain Park, an iconic tourist attraction of the region, Lucas tells me, "Roanoke is a metro mountain destination, which makes it unique. Now, people from larger cities like Washington are moving here. Those who once left Roanoke are now coming back because they are surprised by the development [here]. There are urban things to do, and there are easy hikes." As I look up to the largest free-standing man-made star, I know I have found a hidden star in the heart of Virginia.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY OF TAUBMAN MUSEUM OF ART-VISIT VBR; COURTESY OF JENNIFER GRIFFIN-VISIT VBR; COURTESY OF TEXAS TAVERN-VISIT VBR

BLACK AND BLING

This party season, bring back black, and add crystal accents for a dazzling look. **BY RALAN KITHAN**

1. EARRING
L'Heure du Diamant Drop Earrings, **Chopard**, *price on request; chopard.com*

2. JACKET
Regular-Fit Long-Length Jacket in Faux Leather, **HUGO BOSS**, *₹26,400; hugoboss.com*

3. TOP
Velvet Top with Rhinestones, **ZARA**, *₹2,990; zara.com*

4. DRESS
Embellished Velvet Bustier Mini Dress, **Michael Kors**, *₹44,000; michaelkors.global*

5. BAG
Crystal La Medusa Mini Bag – Silver, **Versace**, *₹3,36,800; versace.com*

6. BRACELET
Millenia Bracelet-Octagon Cut, White, Rhodium Plated, **Swarovski**, *₹26,000; swarovski.com*

7. SKIRT
Fringe-Trim Sequin Skirt, **Ralph Lauren**, *₹34,010; ralphlauren.global*

8. CO-ORD
Black Off Shoulder Crop Top and Midi Skirt Co-ord Set – Silver, **Rimzim Dadu X FabAlley**, *₹3,400; faballey.com*

9. SHOES
Embellished Tequila Plexi 105 Stilettos, **Aquazzura**, *₹99,000; luxe.ajio.com*

CHIC O'CLOCK

Opt for these stylish and chic outfits and accessories for the holiday season.

BY RALAN KITHAN

1. SHIRT
Silk Shirt with Equestrian Print, **Gucci**, *price on request; gucci.com*

2. CLOTHES
Dna Hand Embroidered Jacket, **Countrymade**, *₹26,990; ogaan.com*

3. BRACELET
Wrap Me Black Coloured Leather Bracelet, **Montblanc**, *₹25,000; luxury.tatacliq.com*

4. BAG
Hudson Logo Embossed Leather Crossbody Bag, **Michael Kors**, *₹26,000; michaelkors.global*

5. EAR CUFFS
Louise Ear Cuff, **Lune**, *₹2,200; shoplune.com*

6. WATCH
Alpine Eagle XL Chrono, **Chopard**, *price on Request; chopard.com*

7. JACKET
Distressed Denim Chore Jacket, **Polo Ralph Lauren**, *₹34,010; ralphlauren.global*

8. SHOES
Novian – Leather Moccasins in Navy, **Bally**, *₹70,000; bally.in*

The designer's signature style is merging traditional silhouettes with contemporary and fun designs. Below: Kashmir's nature and landscape hugely inspire Bahl.

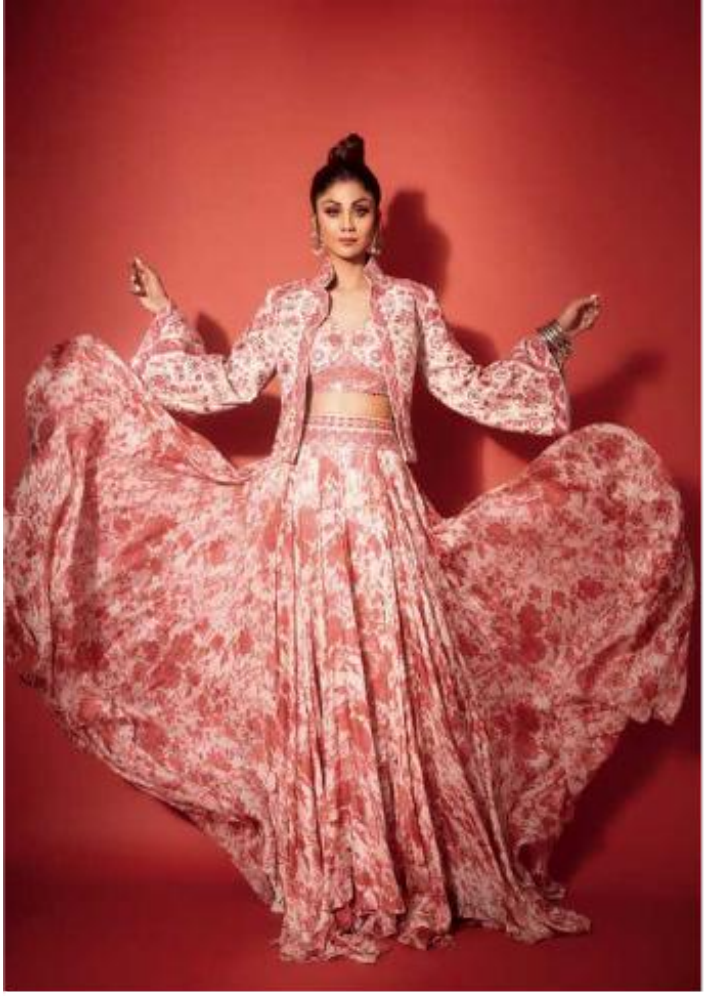
Varun Bahl

A COUTURIER'S SOJOURN

An aesthete who is in sync with the Gen-Z fashion trends, designer Varun Bahl, shares his 'travels shape design' adage. **BY ARPITA KALA**

Which has been a travel destination that has inspired you the most? Why?
Every country, city, and culture is different, and I tend to find inspiration and creativity beyond what meets the eye at most places. Kashmir is my absolute favourite though. I have always been in awe of the nature and landscapes there. The flowers and the region's delicate offerings naturally become a part of collections I create in some way or the other. Additionally, the local crafts, intricate artistry, and colourful embroidery has also always drawn my attention. For my last Pret collection 'Dolce Vita', I was drawn to the mid-summer breeze and splashes of colour that capture the essence of my vacations at places like Italy.

What are some of the travel accessories that are a staple in your luggage?
I'm usually not a very efficient packer and tend to take everything along with me. But essentially, I



Clockwise from left: Actor Shilpa Shetty in a creation by Bahl; the designer wishes to devour New Zealand's delicacies; fun patchwork motifs are the mainstay of Bahl's collection.

prefer packing my day-to-day necessities, and comfortable yet aesthetically pleasing pieces from my wardrobe, that can be worn during a day exploration or even a night out in the city.

Which cities in India do you find the most inspiring as a couturier?
I would say locations and places that showcase the richness and artistry of our Indian heritage. Such places have piqued my interest over the years. The intricate and beautiful designs of our Indian architecture and culture have always inspired me. And of course Kashmir's landscapes and natural beauty are close to my heart and have always inspired me.

What has been your most luxurious vacation in India?
Luxury for me lies in the history and culture of the place I visit, and the memories and teachings you imbibe along the way. I find true luxury in the solace of nature. Locations in India, each different from the other, yet all being culturally rich have been the greatest luxury to visit.

At *T+L India & SA* we believe people make places. Is there any place where you really felt connected to the people?
I would say Kashmir, as I've always had the closest sense of appreciation for the locals and I connect with them. The considerable talent and artistry of the people of kashmir have been of prolific meaning to my life. Apart from that, I've spent a lot of time in Italy in the initial years of my career and have also worked a lot there, so I feel really connected to the people there as well.

What's on your travel bucket list?
The countries I want to explore are New Zealand and Australia. I would love to devour their well-known cuisines and cherish their relationship with nature.

Define the Varun Bahl bride.
When it comes to defining my ideal bride, I feel quirkiness and elegance go hand in hand. I, myself like to play around with bright, eccentric colours with heavy work on them. I want my brides to be able to breathe, eat, and sleep in my couture. A Varun Bahl bride is fun-loving in a traditional way with plenty of youthful charm.

What should a sustainable bride keep in mind before choosing her ensemble?
I suggest investing in a bridal ensemble that you can reuse and rewear to adopt a more sustainable and environmental-friendly lifestyle. Now, more brides are opting for contemporary bridal ensembles with a hint of traditional style. They are looking for outfits that are not only experimental and reusable, but also make for iconic collectibles in their wardrobes. Even with my new collection, 'New Leaf', I have aimed to create outfits that oscillate between Indian wedding wear and red carpet looks, with a more global appeal; catering to the younger generation.

COURTESY OF VARUN BAHL (4); SHUTTERSTOCK (2)

HOLIDAY FAVOURITES

Get all your beauty needs sorted with these products this holiday season. BY RALAN KITHAN

1. Retractable Kajal Black Single Pack, **Health & Glow**, *₹200; healthandglow.com* **2.** Glowy Makeup Serum (30 ml), **LANEIGE**, *₹1,900; nykaa.com* **3.** Nude Finish Illuminating Powder – Buff (6.6 g), **Bobbi Brown**, *₹4,100; sephora.nnnow.com* **4.** Powder Matte Lipstick – Bohemian Queen, **Manish Malhotra Beauty**, *₹799; myglamm.com* **5.** Eau de Parfum Naturelle for Women (100 ml), **Chloe**, *₹14,350; shoppersstop.com* **6.** in my defence Barrier-Building Moisturiser (50 ml), **d'you**, *₹3,500; dyou.co* **7.** Retinol Cica Repair Ampoule (30 ml), **innisfree**, *₹2,850; nykaa.com* **8.** Enchanted Garden Rose Blush – Princess Charming (4.8 g), **Typsy Beauty**, *₹1,199; nykaa.com* **9.** Rose Metals Palette (18 g), **Anastasia Beverly Hills**, *₹5,700; nykaa.com* **10.** Vanilla & Brown Sugar Lip Scrub, **Prolixr**, *₹349; prolixr.in* **11.** Banana Bubblegum Lip Balm, **The Lip Balm Company™**, *₹750; thelipbalmco.in*

What's In Your Travel Kit

TANYA MANIKTALA

A STAR'S ESSENTIALS

Tanya Maniktala is well known for her role as Lata in *A Suitable Boy* on Netflix. The actor also stars in *Flames*, which is on its third season this year. Maniktala dives into her travel bag and reveals all the essentials that she swears by. **BY RALAN KITHAN**

"I always carry a journal because I like to note things down."

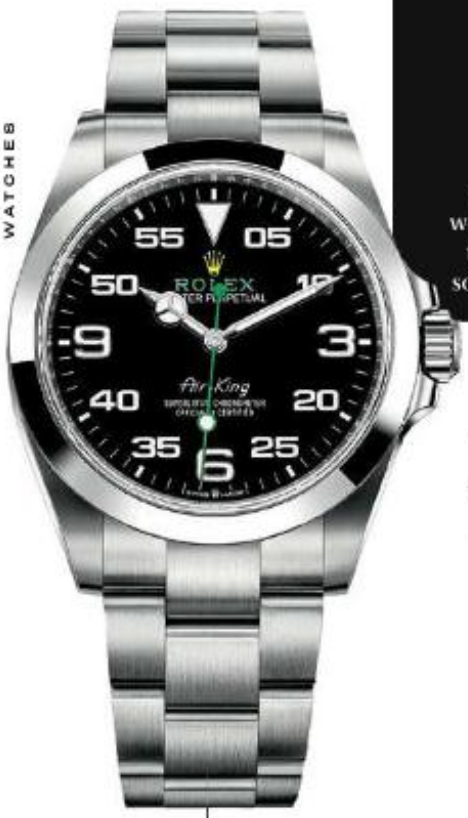
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Black Thalia Sunglasses, **Ray-Ban**, *₹10,390; india.ray-ban.com* **2.** Cotton cap, **H&M**, *₹699; hm.com* **3.** Retro Matte Lipstick-Ruby Woo, **M-A-C**, *₹1,950; maccosmetics.in* **4.** Listerine Mouthwash Liquid – Cool Mint (500 ml), **Listerine**, *₹315; bigbasket.com* **5.** Norwegian Daily Lip Balm SPF15 (4 g), **Neutrogena**, *₹200; healthandglow.com* **6.** Garnier Bright Complete Vitamin C Serum (30 ml), **Garnier**, *₹549; garnier.in* **7.** Body Mist Honey & Vanilla (50 ml), **Forest Essentials**, *₹1,150; forestessentialsindia.com* **8.** Feminine Cramp Relief Roll On (10 ml), **Sanfe**, *₹249; sanfe.in* **9.** Camellia journal, **Dots and Doodles**, *₹699; dotsanddoodles.in*

TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF TANYA MANIKTALA

BE A SPORT!

As the FIFA World Cup fever grips the world, we bring you a variety of sports-inspired watches that are perfect for everyday use as well as for some serious sporty action. **BY RALAN KITHAN**



Air-King
ROLEX
The Rolex Air-King pays tribute to the pioneers of aviation. This new generation Air-King is equipped with calibre 3230 featuring a distinctive black dial, a prominent minute scale for navigational time readings with the 40mm case made of Oystersteel. *₹5,60,000*

Endurance Pro
BREITLING
An ultimate athleisure watch, Endurance Pro blends high precision and innovative technology with a vibrant design. Designed to be both a lightweight watch for athletes and a casual sports chronograph, the watch features a case made of Breitlight® that is highly resistant to scratches, traction and corrosion. *₹2,67,500*

Seamaster 300M Co-Axial Master Chronometer Chronograph 42mm
OMEGA
Water resistant up to 300 metres, this watch is designed for underwater sports and adventures, driven by the OMEGA Master Chronometer Calibre 8800. The 42mm watch is crafted from stainless steel and includes a black ceramic bezel with a white enamel diving scale. *₹4,60,300*

Seastar 1000 Powermatic 80
TISSOT
This is an automatic watch that is powered by the energy of the person who wears it. With its high water-resistance up to 30 bar, screw-down crown and caseback, unidirectional ceramic bezel, and 80 hours of power reserve, the watch is apt for water sports. *₹71,000*

Formula 1 X Senna
TAG HEUER
This special edition racing chronograph pays tribute to Brazilian motorsports racing driver, Ayrton Senna. The versatile watch is water resistant up to 200 metres, and has a dial featuring Super-LumiNova® with matching black and gold hands and hour markers. *₹2,13,150*

PARTY MODE ON

Here's all the fun new things you need to make your year-end celebrations more special. **BY VAIBHAV SHARMA**

STREAMING BOX
Apple TV 4K 128GB

The slickest TV streaming box around is back in an updated avatar. But while you'll definitely love the fast, fluid interface (thanks to the A15 chip), the support for HDR10+, Dolby Atmos Audio, and Apple's excellent library of games, don't ignore the extras you get: there's Ethernet connectivity as well as support for Matter and Thread (the newest smart home tech around). *₹16,900; apple.com/in*

APP

The Jackbox Party Pack 3

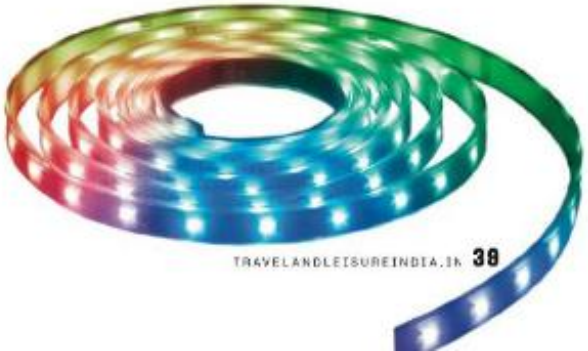
Also available for your new Apple TV, this collection of party games includes five fun, casual games that'll make a great replacement for that old Jenga—there's Quiplash 2, Trivia Murder Party, Guesspionage, Tee KO, and Fakin' It. So go on, refill that punch bowl and get set for a night of laughs.

PORTABLE SPEAKER
Sony XP500 X-Series
Weekend brunches or New Year parties, this portable speaker has you covered. There's IPX4 water resistance, 20 hours of battery life, Quick Charging, Mega Bass, twin USB ports for charging phones, and twin inputs for karaoke mics or even a guitar! Support for Sony's apps, including the Fiestable 'party app', makes this a great choice for your next shopping spree. *₹31,990; sony.co.in*

AIR FRYER
Xiaomi Smart Air Fryer
Now you don't have to worry about spending the party slaving away in the kitchen. Load the air fryer up, and whenever it's time for the fish fingers, get cooking with a simple tap. It is app-controlled; special modes include fruit dehydrating, yoghurt making, as well as recipe presets covering everything from grilled veggies to burgers. *₹8,999; mi.com/in*

COFFEE MAKER
Ariete Vintage
With a 900W heater and a 15bar pump, this coffee maker serves up espresso to keep the party going on longer, but there's another reason to pick this for your kitchen—its smashing retro looks. Support for coffee pods also makes this a lot more convenient, and there's an inbuilt milk frother for the latte lovers. *₹24,900; luxury.tatacliq.com*

SMART LIGHTS
Philips Wiz Smart Colour Changing Strip Light
Philips Wiz LED strips don't just give you excellent colour reproduction, but they're also pretty smart with Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa, and Siri voice control support. The ability to create routines and scenes will also keep your inner smart home geek pretty happy! *₹4,592; jainsonslightsonline.com*



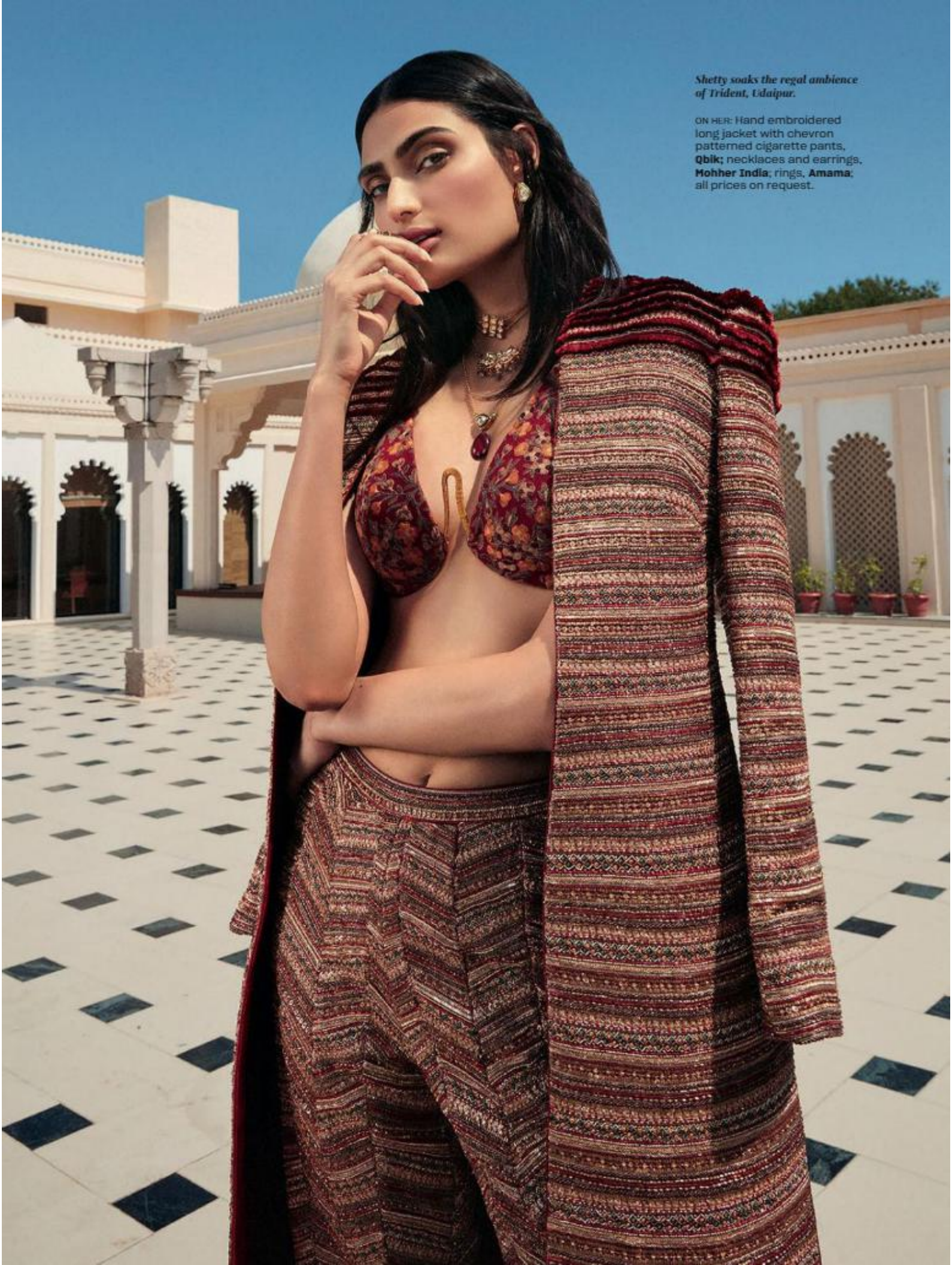
Lady *of the* Lake

On a resplendent October evening, **SIMRRAN GILL** arrives in the ancient city of Udaipur with Bollywood actor **Athiya Shetty,** who plays the royal bride for our cover shoot.

Produced by **CHIRAG MOHANTY SAMAL**
Photographed by **RAHUL JHANGIANI**
Assisted by **AZFAR KHAN**
Styled by **DIVYAK D'SOUZA**
Assisted by **KHUSHI BHATIA**
Hair and Make-up by **KIRAN DENZONGPA**
Assisted by **KARCHUNG GURUNG**
Couture Partner: **QBIK**
Styling Partner: **PHILIPS**
Location: **TRIDENT, UDAIPUR**

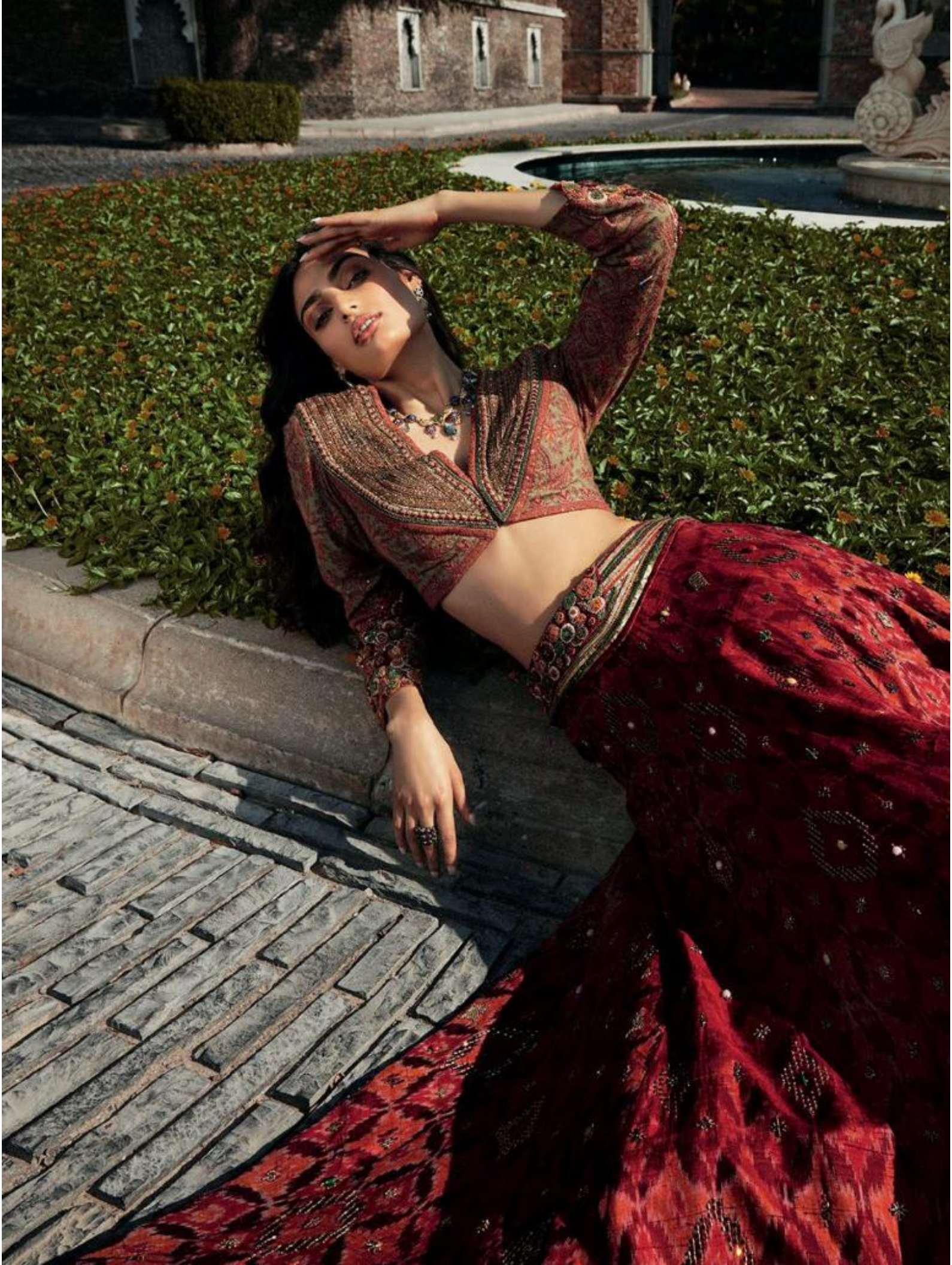
Cover star Athiya Shetty strikes a pose against the glistening waters of Lake Pichola.

ON HER: Hand embroidered, floral patterned *choli* with *ikat* weave *lehenga*, **Qbik**; earrings and ring, **Anayah Jewellery;** all prices on request.



Shetty soaks the regal ambience of Trident, Udaipur.

ON HER: Hand embroidered long jacket with chevron patterned cigarette pants, **Qbik;** necklaces and earrings, **Mohher India**; rings, **Amama**; all prices on request.



The actress luxuriates in the warm Rajasthan sun at the property.

ON HER: Pistachio green cropped jacked with *ikat* weave high-waisted skirt, **Qblic** necklace, ring, and earrings, **Héro Jewellery**; all prices on request.

A jetty ride over Lake Pichola in Udaipur is not new to me. This time, it is at dusk. The sun is inching towards the horizon, the City Palace is glowing, and Jagmandir is preparing to bid adieu to its last bunch of visitors for the day. I, however, am waiting for the sky to turn dark. After all, the glittering lights from the City Palace make for a great spectacle. But instead of a smooth exit, the sun chooses drama, and fills the sky with hues of orange and soft pink. You can never predict the spectacles of Udaipur, a new surprise lingers in every corner of this royal city. It also effortlessly straddles two worlds. On one hand is the regal history of Rajasthan, lush Aravallis, and man-made lakes, and on the other is a contemporary city with towering hotels embodying ancient art, architecture, and spirit.

Soon, we arrive at Trident, Udaipur, the destination for our cover shoot with vivacious actor Athiya Shetty. Situated on the banks of Lake Pichola, the hotel's landscaped gardens offer an idyllic setting. And Shetty seems to be in agreement. "I think Trident is a beautiful property because it has the best of both worlds. You can see the hills, the beautiful lake, and cherish a sunset. And what I love about the property is that it has so much greenery and space and I think that is what luxury is for me—space."

We discover Udaipur's serene charm the next morning, as we get the cameras rolling for the first shot, a little post crack of dawn. As Shetty gets into her first outfit, we ask her what makes a perfect holiday for her?

"For me, it would definitely be the company and the energy I am surrounded by. Whether I am on a beach or in the middle of mountains, to be able to live in the moment and switch off is something that I think makes a holiday a holiday. Try to keep away from your phone and just soak in the beautiful property, city, or inn. Take chances whether it's with food or sightseeing or shopping—just do what makes you happy. Don't have a super strict schedule of timings, just go with the flow," she says.

And speaking of being able to take chances, Shetty shares how she loves experimenting with different cuisines while travelling. "I love experimenting and trying the local food. I think that's what is exciting about going to a new place," she adds while sampling the *Rajasthani thali* at the property's restaurant Aravalli.

The Rajasthan sun blazes overhead as we prepare for our next shot. But the team is perseverant. And it's not new for Shetty to step out of her comfort zone to get the perfect shot, after all her career demands it. From her first film in 2015 to her latest in 2021, the actor has shown dogged determination.

"I think I have evolved so much as a human being and that has resulted in me evolving as an actor and as a performer. I feel that you grow with every film and project," she says, adding, "You are learning new things about yourself, your craft, and that's really important. I don't think the excitement and the newness of each set will ever change."

When asked about making mistakes, Shetty is quick to respond. "I have made mistakes and grown. I've also learnt to cope with some insecurities, while overcoming the others. And I think all these things make you a better actor and a better performer," she iterates.

For Shetty, holidays are all about being laid-back and going with the flow.

ON HER: Kashmiri and *zardozi* embroided blouse with multi-coloured *ikat* weave *lehenga*, **Qbik**; earrings, **Méro Jewellery**; hand cuffs, **Lara Morakhia** and **Sangeeta Boochra**; bangles, **Méro Jewellery** and **Sangeeta Boochra**; all prices on request.

The actress loves the lush greenery of Trident, Udaipur.

ON HER: Hand embrioded short kurta with terracotta coloured *sharara*, **Qbik;** earrings, **Mohher India;** maang tikka and rings, **Anayah Jewellery;** all prices on request.

We now gear up for the last shot of the day, and what better time than dusk to capture Lake Pichola in all its magnificence. A short golf cart ride away from Trident, Udaipur, Lake Pichola best describes Udaipur's serenity. This freshwater lake lures many to the city time and again, including me.

And so, I cannot help but wonder about that one place that Athiya feels drawn to. Humouring my curiosity, she says, "London. I have always felt extremely connected to London. That's my favourite destination, it almost feels home but each time I go, I always discover a new part of the city, whether it's a restaurant, store, Broadway show, or shopping. It feels like home but also feels like a new city every time I visit."

And her favourite travel partner? "My mum," she says. "Because I have my best holidays with her. We're on the same wavelength when it comes to holidays and what we should be doing," Shetty smiles.

During our fun chats in between shots, Shetty tells me she prefers a quiet and chilled holiday. "I am not much of a party person," she laughs. And in the age-old beaches versus mountains debate, she would side with team mountains. "I used to be a beach person, but now I think I gravitate towards mountains. When we were kids, we would go to the beach, and I feel like now that I have grown up, I kind of want to explore the mountains," she shares.

As we wrap up our shoot on the banks of Lake Pichola, the actor excitedly tells me about things on the work front, "I just finished shooting for a film with a bunch of very special people and I am super excited about it. And I hope everybody enjoys watching it as much as I enjoyed filming it."

ON HER: Hand embroidered long jacket with chevron patterned cigarette pants, **Qbik**; necklace and earrings, **Mohher India**; rings, **Amama**; all prices on request.

ON HER: Pistachio green cropped jacked with *ikat* weave high-waisted skirt, **Qbik**; necklace, ring, and earrings, **Méro Jewellery**; all prices on request.

Visit Udaipur

GETTING THERE

Vistara *(airvistara.com)* and **IndiGo** *(goindigo.in)* operate regular flights to Udaipur from major Indian cities such as New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bengaluru.

STAY

Located on the banks of Lake Pichola, **Trident, Udaipur** is nearly 27 kilometres from the domestic airport and offers various offbeat experiences for travellers. One can choose from 142 deluxe rooms and suites at the property. *Doubles from ₹21,750; tridenthotels.com*

Clockwise from left: Trident, Udaipur offers an outdoor heated pool; the hotel's interiors pay ode to Rajasthan's regal legacy and heritage; one of the experiences here is a leisurely dinner on Lake Pichola.

Timeless Charm

Located on the banks of Lake Pichola, Trident, Udaipur lets you bask in Rajasthan's glorious history and hospitality. **BY SIMRRAN GILL**

SPREAD ACROSS 43 ACRES of lush landscape, Trident, Udaipur lies a short drive away from the domestic airport as well as in close proximity to the city's cultural and commercial hubs. Located on the banks of Lake Pichola and overlooking Jagmandir, the property offers 142 rooms and suites with modern amenities. The suites at the property feature a bedroom and a living room separated by sliding doors for privacy, along with an additional powder room for visitors. One can also spot artworks by Rajasthani artists that add a dash of grandeur and style to the space. The suites also come with an intimate dining table for four.

While the hotel's interiors pay an ode to Rajasthan's regal legacy and heritage, outside, the property boasts green and serene landscapes with well-manicured lawns. Aravalli, the all-day dining, multi-cuisine restaurant offers Western, Asian, Indian, and regional Rajasthani specialities. The Terrace, a multi-cuisine global restaurant, offers a la carte selection of dishes along with a live station; and Amrit Mahal serves a selection of spirits, wines, and cocktails and is a perfect setting for an entertaining evening or a quiet nightcap.

The property also offers other facilities including a fitness centre with a complete range of cardiovascular and strength equipment, free weights, and stretching and relaxation areas; an outdoor heated swimming pool with a view of the Aravallis; and a kids club, which is a private abode for young guests.

For those looking for an offbeat and memorable time at Trident, Udaipur, the property has curated a set of experiences. Some of them include a sunset boat ride on Lake Pichola, a private yoga session that can be tailored according to individual needs, a heritage walk that will take one through Udaipur's colourful history, a pottery session with a rural artisan, and a leisurely dinner on Lake Pichola created exclusively by the in-house chefs. *tridenthotels.com*

The suites at the property feature a bedroom and living room separated by sliding doors.

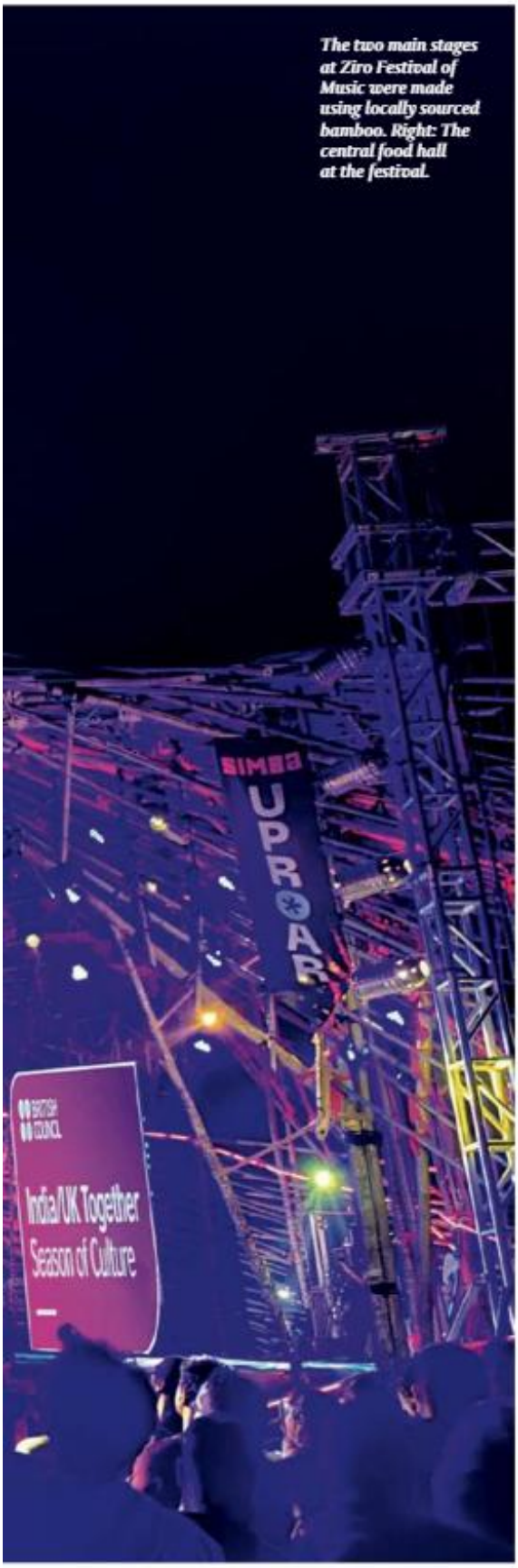
COURTESY OF THE OBEROI GROUP

Experiences

TRAVELLERS' TALES, FROM NEAR AND FAR

MUSIC FOR THE EARTH

Ziro Festival of Music held in Arunachal Pradesh is lauded as much for its eclectic lineup as it is for preserving local culture and the environment. On its ninth edition, KALPANA SUNDER walks the festival grounds to review the sustainability initiatives.



The two main stages at Ziro Festival of Music were made using locally sourced bamboo. Right: The central food hall at the festival.

ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF KALPANA SUNDER

AS THE SUN GOES DOWN the horizon and casts purple shadows on the sprawling paddy fields, the bamboo lights of the stalls glitter like fireflies, and music reverberates all across the ground. People of all ages lounge on the grassy slopes, some hold bamboo mugs of the local brew *apong*, others sway to music and feast on plates of tribal fare.

I am at the ninth edition of the Ziro Festival of Music, considered one of the most eco-conscious music festivals in the country. The festival is being held after a hiatus of two years, and the excitement is palpable. It features independent musicians and bands from different genres—classical and rock to folk music. The setting of the festival is unique in itself—against the backdrop of burnished golden paddy fields. Around the grounds are the rolling hills of Eastern Himalayas, bamboo groves, pine forests, and small villages that are home to the Apatani tribe, one of the last pagan societies in the world. The Apatanis have always existed in harmony with their unique environment, cultivating rice in the valley and worshipping nature.

The festival starts with the traditional welcome called Daminda performed by 400 Apatani women in traditional clothes. I see the emphasis on local food and drinks with stalls selling everything from locally brewed millet beer called *apong* in bamboo mugs to grilled pork, rice cooked in bamboo stems, local salads like *singju,* and home brewed wines and beers. There is an emphasis on sustainability and eco-friendly practices, and single use plastic is discouraged. The music is eclectic—from Japanese high energy rock band Pinky Doodle Poodle to Manipur's diva Mangka who both sings and plays the *pena*, to the French group Yelli Yelli, and the emotionally charged music of Rehmat e Nusrat, a band of musicians from Uttarakhand who reinvent the *qawwali*.

I talk to the co-founder and creative producer of the festival, Anup Kutty, about the evolution of the festival. "My partner Bobby is from here and we

just came here to relax and holiday; that's when we hit upon this idea of starting a music festival to encourage and collaborate with independent musicians from across the North East as well as other parts of India," he reminisces. "We never imagined that it would grow into this huge festival visited by people from all over the country. When we started, Ziro had very little infrastructure or concrete buildings and all we could see were paddy fields and the hills around us. But as the festival grew, so did the town," he adds.

"The essence of the festival was always sustainability, as the Apatanis have always lived close to nature; we have just added more design elements. We also noticed that the festival was generating a lot of waste, we put in corrective action and banned plastic and made sure that we do not litter. The festival is getting bigger every year and we hope, better managed," Kutty says.

Sustainability has been built into the festival at every level, from the bamboo and pine wood used in construction, the upcycled cloth bunting, to utensils made from local leaves, banana stems, and bamboo. I talk to Udit Mittal and his partner Kirti Jalan from QX Design, who conceptualised and built the festive space this year and worked extensively with the local Apatani people. Locally

▲ *Clockwise from above: Mixologist Yangdup Lama creates unique cocktails using local ingredients at the festival; onlookers lounge on the grassy slopes of the valley; the festival begins with a dance performed by 400 Apatani women.*

Ziro Valley is home to the Apatani *tribe, which is one of the last pagan societies in the world. Left: The festival emphasises on local food and drinks.*

GETTING THERE
IndiGo (*goindigo.in*) operates flights from New Delhi and Kolkata to Jorhat Airport in Assam. From there, Ziro Valley is a seven-hour drive.

STAY
Hotel Ziro View is the ideal option to stay in town. Tented accommodations as well as home stays are also available.

sourced bamboo is used along with some bamboo from Assam and timber and pinewood to build the two main stages called Sun and Moon, the stalls, and the central food court. Even flattened bamboo from previous editions has been reused.

Scrap material like bamboo and ropes have been used to fashion the rustic lights in the stalls. The central food hall, which used interlocking bamboo poles is an architectural marvel that looks magical at night. "We started our work from July with a visit to understand the site and what would work here. We have now been living here for more than 45 days at a stretch making sure everything is constructed and put up. We trust the locals and their indigenous knowledge and if they say a bridge or a stage is strong enough, we know it will be," says Mittal.

Takar Nabam is an Itanagar based singer who fuses folk music with vocals and guitar music and has been performing at the festival since 2014. "When I first came, there were no proper roads and it used to take us a long time to come from Itanagar. We have better infrastructure now, and can travel in less time. Initially, not many people were aware of the festival but now there is a large niche audience that appreciates the independent music lineup and is willing to travel long distances for the unique experience," says Nabam.

Dhristi Kumar, a young advertising professional from Mumbai, has been coming to the festival for over four editions and says that the festival is coming in to its own and getting better every year. "I also like that they think seriously about sustainability and good design besides good music," she opines.

Leena and Pratik, a couple from Bengaluru, are staying at a local homestay while attending the music festival. "The lineup of music has been amazing and eclectic and completely different from any other festival. There is so much local talent that we are not aware of, and that has been the highlight for us," they say.

I attend an interesting bartending masterclass organised by Diageo's Signature brand that has partnered with the festival this year. Mixologist Yangdup Lama (whose bar in Delhi, Sidecar has been placed in the Top 50 bars in the world), uses local ingredients like bay leaf, palm candy sugar syrup, and Himalayan pink salt to create unique cocktails including one using the local millet beer *apong*. There are also plogging runs to keep the festival grounds clean and free of garbage. Ruchira Jaitly, vice president and portfolio head of Diageo India, says, "Our ethos of reconnecting with nature and discovering joy in the process matches the philosophy of the festival. It was also beautiful for us to watch how every participant took charge of one's waste, thus standing up to the overall commitment of leaving only positive footprints behind."

Winners Of The Readers' Choice India's Best Awards 2022

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Travel + Leisure
India's Best Awards 2022

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T+L Champions

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JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa is a sanctuary of scenic luxury (p. 32).

ON THE COVER:
T+L Champions of India's Best Awards 2022.

ILLUSTRATION BY Maanya Dhar

TOP (CLOCKWISE): SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF VICTORINOX; COURTESY OF RAFFLES UDAIPUR. BOTTOM: COURTESY OF JW MARRIOTT MALDIVES RESORT & SPA

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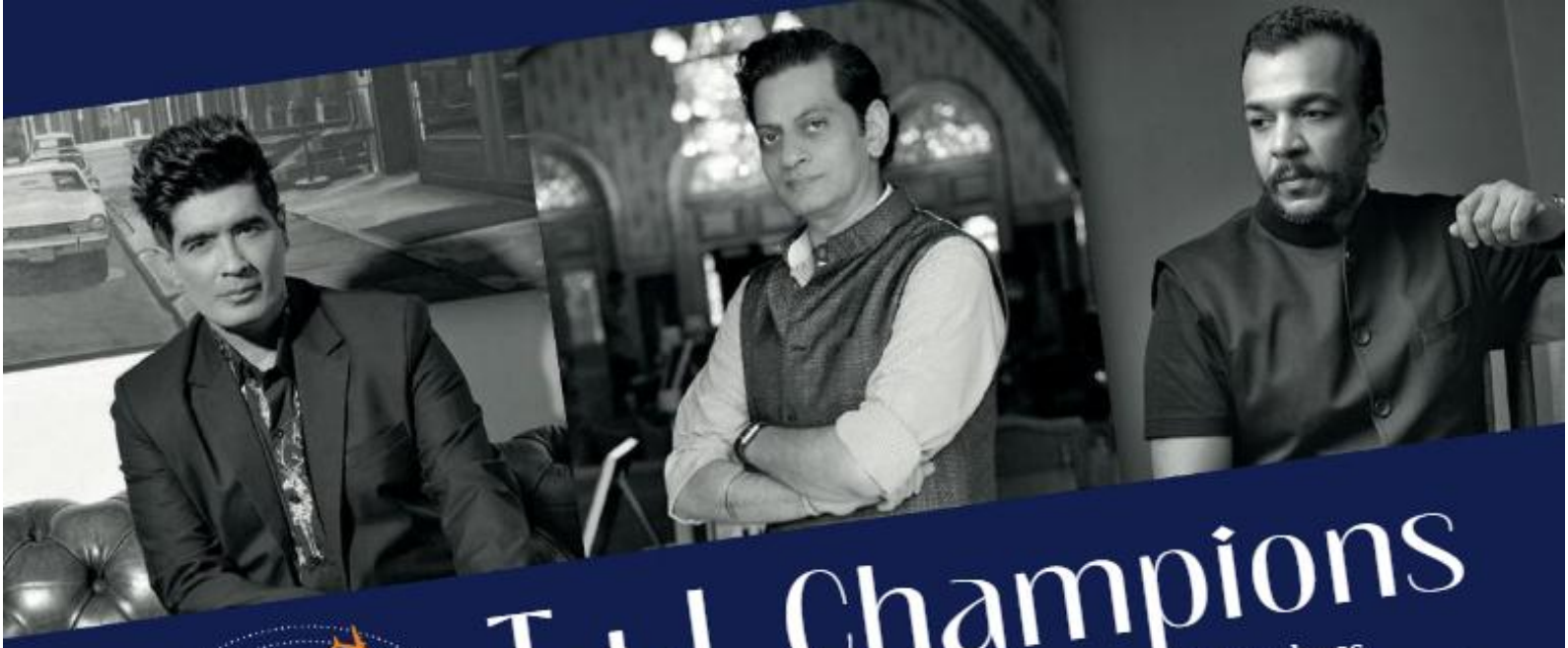
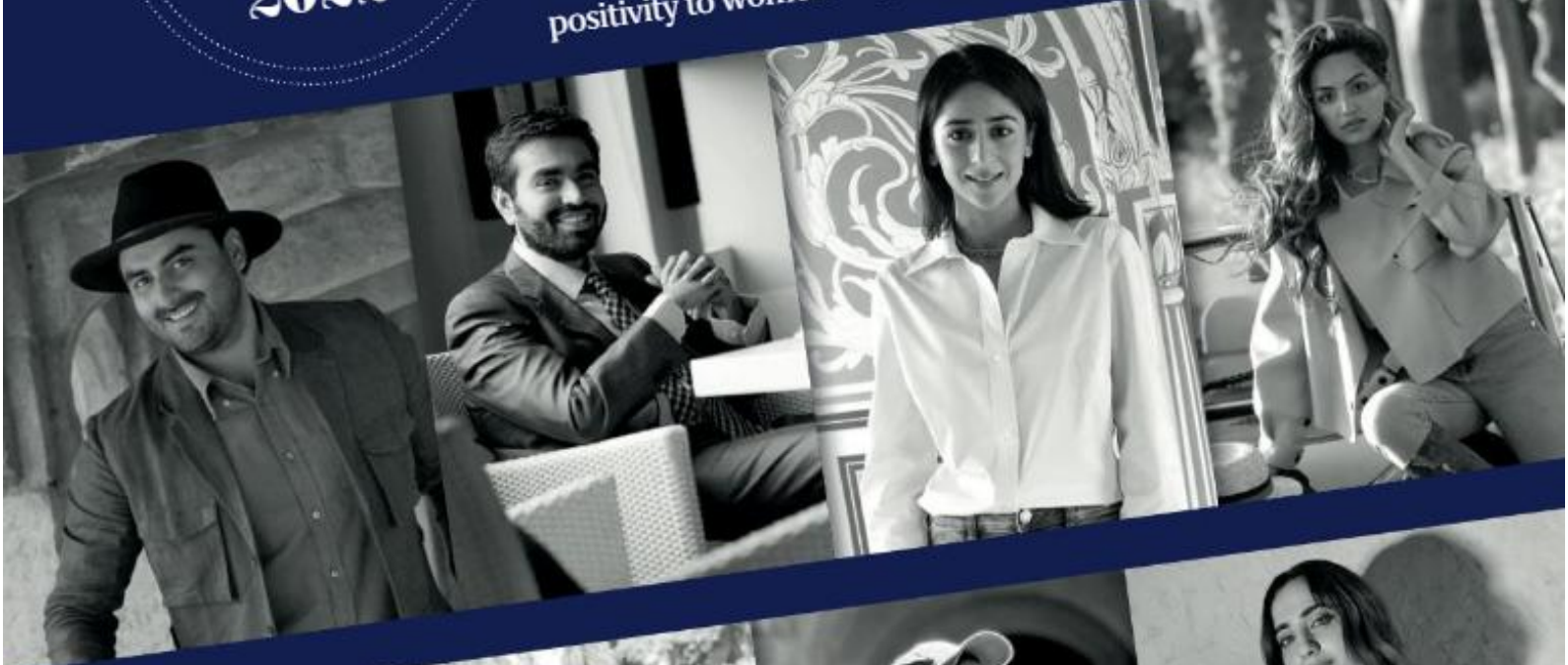


TRAVEL+ LEISURE INDIA'S BEST AWARDS 2022

T+L Champions

Travel +Leisure India's Best Awards 2022 introduces T+L Champions—11 special award categories felicitating individuals who are creating positive change in their respective fields that are directly or indirectly related to travel. Read on to meet these changemakers—from champions of sustainable fashion and body positivity to women empowerment, community tourism, and more.



RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Aakash Ranison

Climate Activist

What inspired you to become a climate activist?
Back in 2015, I got an opportunity to travel to Ladakh for a Snow Leopard Conservation Project. It was the first time I was experiencing the unparalleled beauty of the trans-Himalayan landscapes. I grew up in Indore, Haridwar, Aligarh, and Delhi and have travelled to all the major tier-one and tier-two cities, so seeing plastic waste wasn't an uncommon sight for me. But I wasn't prepared to see that amount of plastic waste in Ladakh, and it shocked me. This event turned me from a responsible citizen into an activist.

What does responsible travel mean to you?
Responsible travelling is being mindful, kind, thoughtful, understanding, and respectful towards nature and all the sentient living beings.

Your book *Climate Change Explained: For One and All* came out in 2021. Tell us more about the book.
My motive was to make science interesting, easy to read, and understandable for everyone. This is why I made the book short, simple, colourful, and most importantly free.

Are there more books on the way?
Yes, Penguin just signed me up for the next book, which is scheduled to be launched in 2023. The book addresses individuals and discusses problems with our current lifestyle and suggests alternative ways to adopt a sustainable lifestyle.

What are your upcoming sustainable initiatives?
A documentary and my next climate art installation.

How does travel inspire you?
My life is travel. I don't have a home, I live in hotels, hostels, homestays, tents, gurudwaras, strangers' houses, or under the sky. Travel is my teacher, school, college, university, work, passion, and dream. I left home with no knowledge, no money, name, confidence, or purpose. I found myself while heading towards an unknown destination on that long road.

You've been travelling around India on foot. What made you do this?
I've been travelling the length and breadth of India and other countries with my backpack for over eight years. I started with cycling. I wanted to travel without harming environment and hence, I always choose a carbon neutral way of travelling.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Best slow travel destinations
Demul in Spiti Valley, Gemur in Himachal, Ladhpura Khas in Madhya Pradesh, and Pochampally village in Telangana.

Bucket list destination
Afghanistan. I've been reading and watching videos of the landscapes and culture of this country and I love it.

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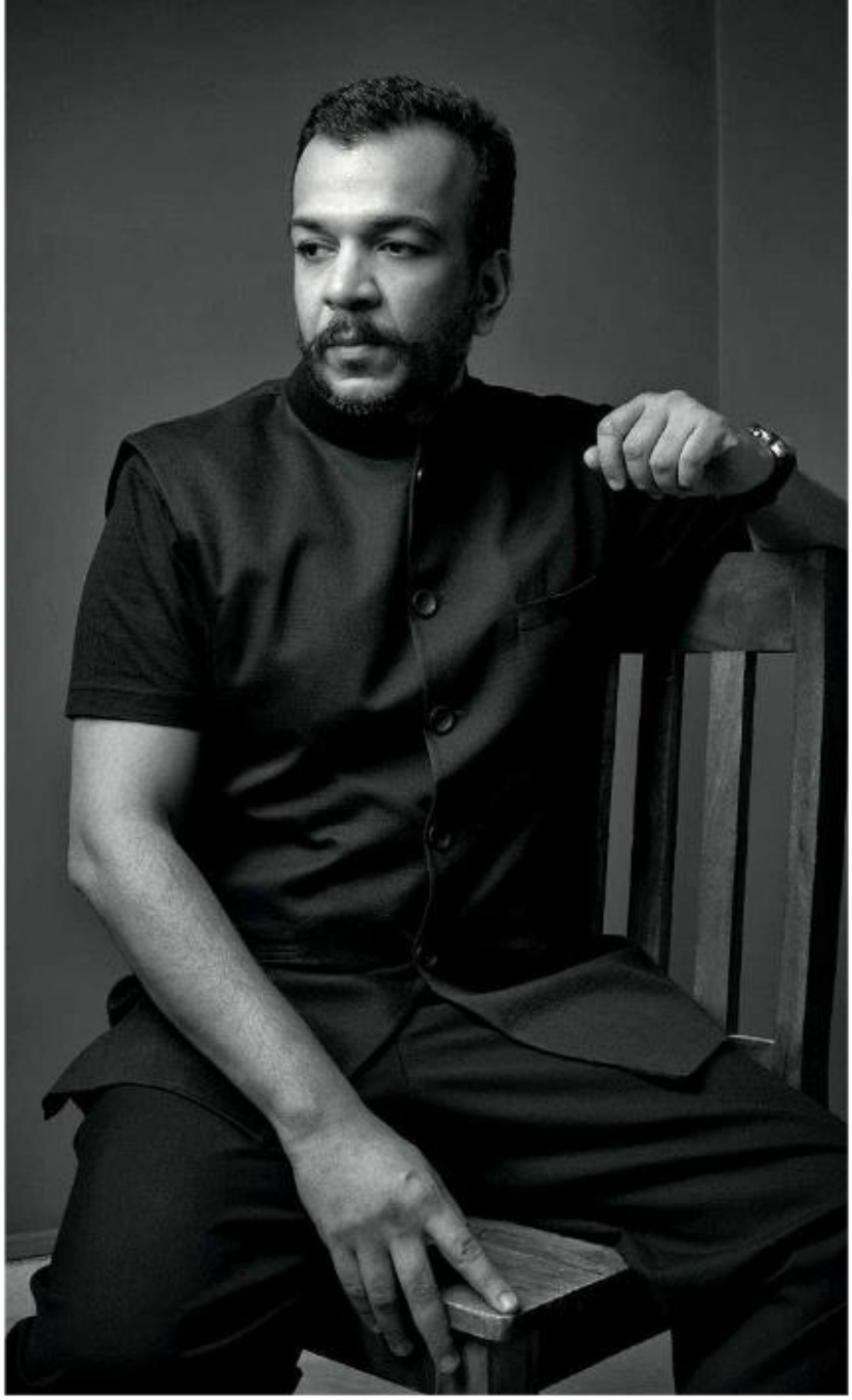


SUSTAINABLE FASHION

Amit Aggarwal

Fashion Designer

What does sustainable fashion mean to you?
Fashion in its most nascent and core aspect derives its inspiration from human emotion. In this sense, sustainability has always been part of our DNA. We never strategically think of weaving sustainability into a collection because it's the bedrock on what our brand started from and rests on—from always using polymers and gravitating towards alternative materials.

What prompted you to take the route of sustainability in fashion?
It all started from coming across a discarded piece of plastic on a factory floor in Okhla, Delhi. It was amorphous, abstract, and not easily understood. Only later did I realise it was polymer, and since that day polymer has been the signature of our brand. So, my journey to sustainability has never been conscious, it has been a part of our brand's DNA since day one.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Things you can't travel without
Kicks to stroll around the streets, moisturiser, and comfortable clothes.

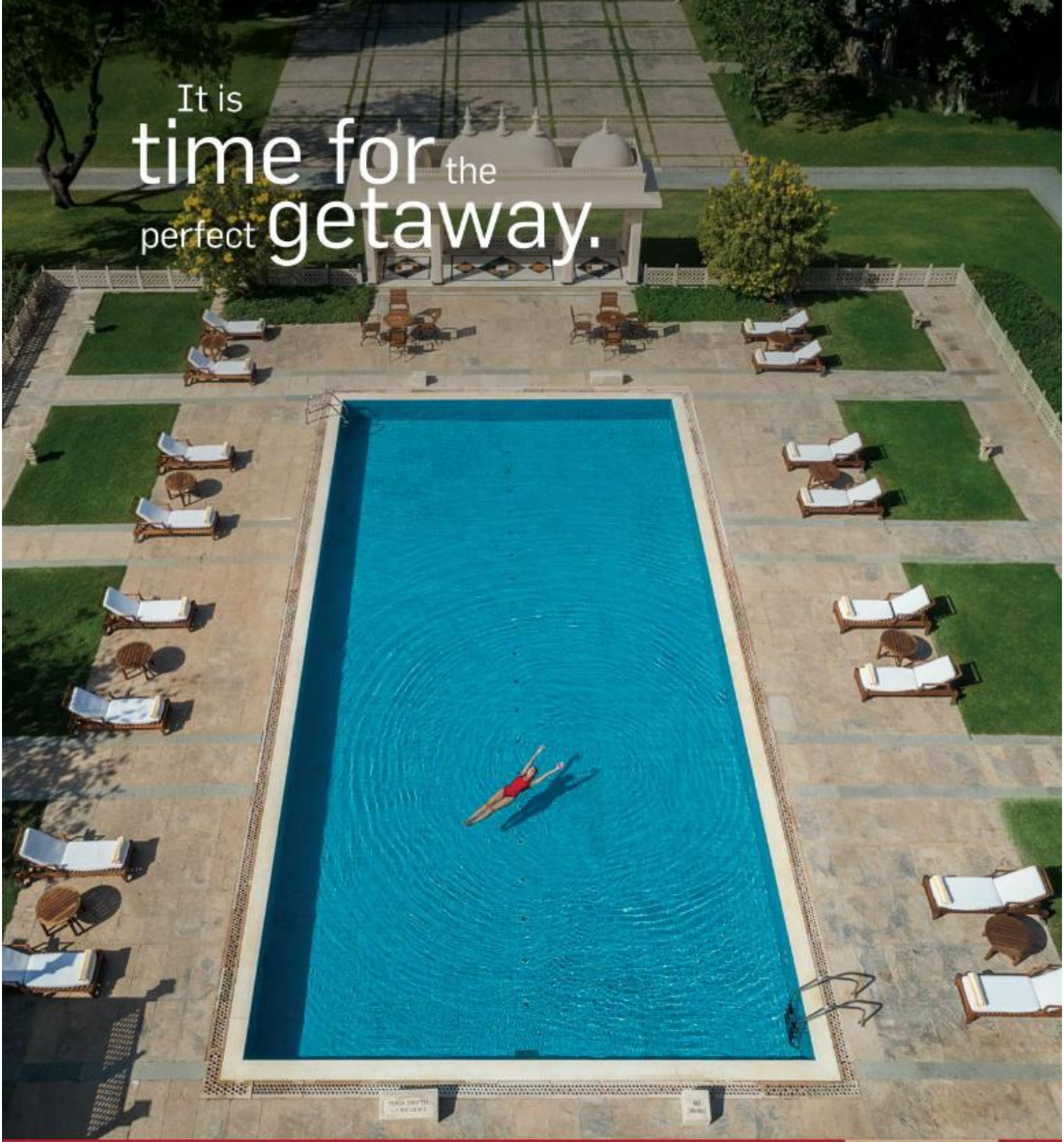
Best slow travel destination
Bangkok.

Tell us about the innovations you have introduced over the years in your brand?
I wouldn't call it innovation, as it would mean it's final and has reached a place of perfection. For me, one is always learning. From our Plastic Perfect Line to Pedesis Couture 2022, we're experimenting with new materials, weaving metallic jewellery, pushing the boundaries of silhouettes and pattern making to align ourselves with the larger human race.

How does travel inspire you?
A better part of my inspiration does not necessarily come from fashion. It could be a poem, a line I read somewhere, or the endless possibilities and worlds that I come across in my travels. From the way Southeast Asian countries use basketry to the bustling markets of Turkey, to even coming across the masterpieces of Zaha Hadid, the inspirations are endless.

Tell us about the road ahead for you and the brand.
We'd love to explore the theme of human evolution more, although we already have. The past few years have changed us irreversibly and I'd like to explore this new world order through a purist, human gaze.

Which, according to you, is the best destination for sustainable shopping?
Every city has these pockets of alternative materials and sustainability—you only have to look for it.



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TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY

Anunay Sood

Travel Photographer, Digital Creator

What inspired you to become a travel photographer and digital creator?
I always had a thing for travel, and my love for the mountains and passion for storing all my travel memories as photographs, combined with the evolving digital trends pushed me to become a digital content creator.

What, according to you, is the significance of travel photography?
The world needs to know what it is like to see the planet through different lenses. Photography, in its true essence, is all about preserving whatever is too good to be witnessed just once. Travel photography is about capturing the calm and joy of travelling.

You are the co-founder of Meta-Social, a performance and marketing solutions company. How does your career in travel align with your business?
My love for travelling converted into a career over time and I was content with the living that this profession got me. I did not want to commercialise my love for travel entirely to earn a living. At the same time, I couldn't afford to halt my growth, hence these ventures are a by-product of my urge to keep growing both, professionally and financially in life.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Bucket list destination
Banff in Canada.

Most challenging photography experience
Capturing the night sky in freezing temperatures in Iceland.

Which is the destination that has made a special connection with you and why?
Iceland—it was my dream trip and was very special because I had actually manifested it and saved money for it.

What's the best destination for travel photography according to you?
If you have a vision for photography and the passion to travel, any place, no matter how ordinary, can be the best for you to capture unmatchable moments.

You travel with your partner, Brinda Sharma. How do you sort out differences while travelling?
Differences in perspectives, though challenging to deal with, surely help us grow. And communication is key when it comes to resolving any differences.

Which is the best camera for travel photography?
What is important in travel photography is your vision, and as long as you know your equipment well, a basic DSLR can also be a game changer.

Are there any projects in the pipeline?
Yes, our love for travel has got us to make 'Project Ghar'– a homestay service venture, launching soon.

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COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

Maharawal Chaitanya Raj Singh

44th King of Jaisalmer

How has your journey been since the coronation in 2021?
It has been a surreal experience so far. The role of Maharawal is such an inextricable part of the 868-year-long history of the Jaisalmer *riyasat*, and there is so much goodwill and responsibility attached to the role. I feel connected to the people of Jaisalmer and this role very strongly, and my time here over the past year or so has felt very natural.

What are some of the steps that you've taken to empower the community and promote local tourism in Jaisalmer post COVID-19?
The Rajkumari Ratnavati School is now operational post the pandemic. It has boosted the confidence of girls who haven't been to school in over two years. Also, the people and various stakeholders of Jaisalmer have been pushing to increase the number of flights to Jaisalmer. My constant social media pressure on this issue has highlighted this as the need of the hour and the number of flights have been increased.

The Rajkumari Ratnavati Girls School started to promote socio-economic development is an architectural marvel. How did the idea for the same come about?
The idea was simple—to create an educational and cultural space for creative development. The fact that it became an architectural marvel is due to the team we had for the building, including Michael Daube's vision, Diana Kellogg's persistence, and Kareem Khan's patience.

What are some of the experiences that you recommend for travellers in Jaisalmer?
I suggest visiting Bada Bagh. The magnificent royal cenotaphs and the 15th-century dam is stunning. My work in heritage conservation started with this monument. I also recommend visiting Lodurva, the eighth capital of the princely state of Jaisalmer, for the beautiful Jain Mandir and its intricate architecture.

Being a millennial, what's your travelling style?
Light, practical, and smart, with music for sure.

What's in store next for tourism and the local community in Jaisalmer?
We have a Women's Economic Centre coming up at Rajkumari Ratnavati Girls School, which will give a sense of upliftment and economic freedom to the women in the region. Also, a lot of new hospitality ventures will come up in Jaisalmer.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

One destination you keep going back to
Kashmir.

Two travel essentials
My backpack and a bottle of water.

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CONSCIOUS BEAUTY

Diipa Büller-Khosla

Global Influencer, Entrepreneur

What does conscious beauty mean to you?
Conscious beauty to me is applying a more thoughtful approach to beauty—a cleaner, natural, and more transparent form of beauty that allows you to feel beautiful inside out. Most importantly, using ingredients that add their own essence to the formulation. For instance, Indē Wild highlights all of its ethically-sourced ingredients and the formulation on the packaging to ensure transparency.

What prompted you to launch a conscious beauty line?
Born and raised in India and then living my adult life in Europe, it took me years to fall in love with all of me and to find my most authentic self. Many like me struggle with this tug of war between respect for my roots and pushing beyond societal and patriarchal norms. So, I created a brand that celebrates both tradition and modernity and creates space for unapologetic self-love.

What philosophy do you follow for your brand?
Through Indē Wild, we are reclaiming and redefining beauty ideals that have been decided by a select group. As a WOC (women of colour), it is important to me to celebrate individuality—our skin, bodies, and life rooted in our heritage, guided by our foremothers, and shaped by our choices. Simply put, difference is our superpower! So, we have a zero per cent photoshop policy to ensure we are transparent and honest about ourselves to uplift every individual's confidence.

Our products are formulated through the lens of Ayurvedistry™ where 5,000-year-old Ayurvedic rituals meet conscious chemistry. Ingredients like Vitamin C, niacinamide, and hyaluronic acid from modern dermatology balance and support ingredients like turmeric, *ashwagandha*, and *bakuchiol*.

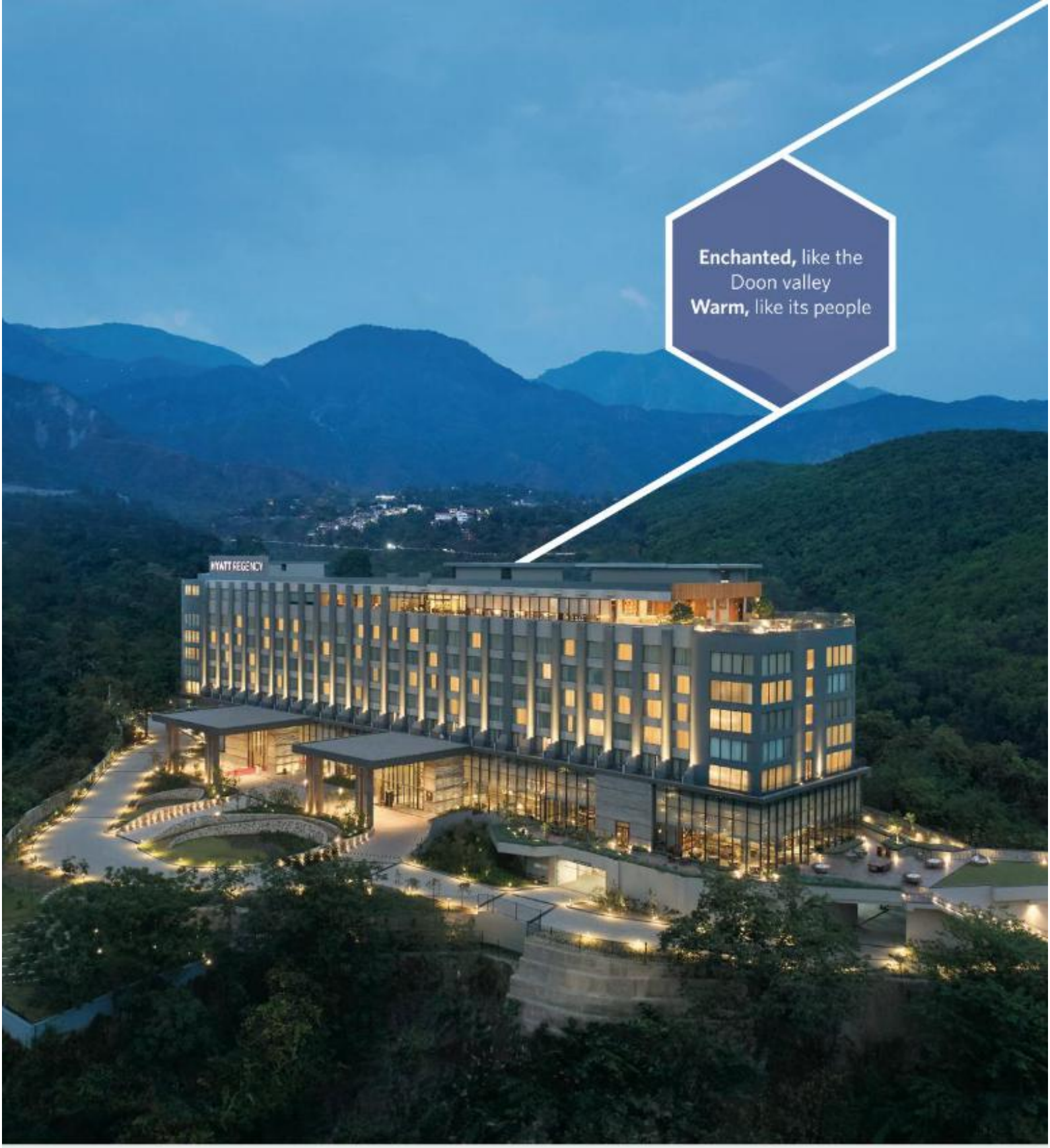
What newer innovations would you like to bring into your line?
I would like to be constantly evolving in the fields of sustainability, ingredient introduction, and potency.

How does travel inspire you?
Travel, especially to the motherland, is always inspiring! It is where we source our ingredients from. But most importantly, it connects me to people in every part of the world that inspire us and spark insightful conversations, which leads to us reconsidering and redefining our brand.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Travel essentials
SPF glow drops, AM/PM serum, and a camera.

A sustainable beauty hack
Using microfibre towels to remove make-up so that I don't create single-use waste.



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WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Princess Gauravi Kumari

General Secretary of Princess Diya Kumari Foundation

Tell us about PDKF. How did you become a part of it?
The Princess Diya Kumari Foundation (PDKF) was started by my mother, Princess Diya Kumari in 2013, for the upliftment and welfare of the women in the rural areas of Rajasthan. It was always close to my heart as it was for her. After my graduation I started making an active effort in getting involved with the foundation activities. It was during COVID-19 that I really took on the responsibility to work on the designs and outreach of the foundation. I started The PDKF Store in 2021 with a friend and French designer, Claire Derro, and together we introduced a range of contemporary products using traditional techniques that held a global appeal. We began with creating an e-store to give a wider platform to these women, so that their talent could reach beyond the walls of the City Palace.

What are some of the recent initiatives of PDKF that are affecting change?
Our recent project, 'Shakti' offers free certified courses to girls of all age groups from disadvantaged backgrounds in stitching, basic computer skills, beauty therapy, and touristguide courses. On completing the course, we offer certificates to these students, which further help them to prepare for future employment opportunities. We have also started a new centre in Ajmer where women are being trained in stitching and other traditional handwork techniques.

How does travel help you in your pursuits?
I think travel keeps my ideas fresh, and also allows me to understand the international market for the type of things that our lady artisans at PDKF can produce using traditional craft techniques of Rajasthan but adjusted for the design sensibilities of the West. It also keeps my mind open to understanding different thought processes, and helps make me a more well-rounded human and citizen of the world.

Which is your favourite travel destination?
My all-time favourite travel destination has to be New York because I went to university there and it feels like home. I love the energy of the city, shopping, restaurants, and how everything is easily accessible. I also always enjoy travelling around Italy, Paris, and London.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Bucket list destinations
Japan, South Africa, Marrakesh.

Favourite fashion destination
Paris and New York.

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Keshav Suri

Executive Director, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group

The Keshav Suri Foundation has been working relentlessly towards building an egalitarian environment, especially in the corporate sector. What changes have you brought about with your organisation and how hopeful are you of the future?
For the last four years, Keshav Suri Foundation (*keshavsuri.foundation*) is in a quest to provide livelihood opportunities for queers, people with various disabilities, as well as acid attack survivors through its dedicated programmes and initiatives. The foundation is committed towards upliftment of marginalised communities by providing easy access to education, which has resulted in scholarships and fellowships. The vision to make our country a safer place for these communities has only become stronger over the years.

We support organisations with training and engagement activities to learn and understand more about the community. The objective is to bridge the gap, create opportunities, and make them accessible to the community. If I talk about The LaLiT in specific, other than regular conversation around diversity, equity, and inclusion, we train and hire members from across different communities. Be it policies, hiring process, or learning and development, we are ensuring that diversity is recognised and celebrated throughout the process.

Mental health of the LGBTQIA+ community is a crucial issue, and your foundation has a service dedicated to it. Tell us more about it.
The Keshav Suri Foundation is proud to have initiated free mental health care services for the LGBTQIA+ communities, allies, as well as the public at large. We started this in the year 2019 and in the last three years since the inception of the programme, we have supported over 2,000 queer folks with physical and virtual counselling sessions. The foundation has two queer affirmative counsellors on board and so far, has hosted over 100 such sessions with communities in different states to support those in need.

Is there any particular campaign you're working on at the moment that you want to highlight?
There's a lot that my foundation is working on. We are working on skilling, sensitisation, hosting regular conversations, webinars, and conferences. We launched India Workplace Equality Index in partnership with Pride Circle and Stonewall UK, we support the LGBTQIA+ community with free access to mental health services, and we are also exploring ways to support elderly LGBTQIA+ community members.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Favourite queer friendly destination
Paris. It's my favourite destination in the world and the prettiest I have ever been to.

Bucket list destination
I would describe myself as passionate, eclectic, and a little crazy, so North Korea.

BODY POSITIVITY

Kusha Kapila

Digital Creator

You've been vocal about dealing with PCOS and body issues; and have normalised terms such as 'hourglass pear' and 'FUPA'. What do you do in moments of low self-esteem?
The only reason I am vocal about PCOS is because I want to normalise it for myself. Many women are affected by PCOS. I face acne issues often and, being in the visual medium, it's the first thing people notice about you. While I don't wish to be glorified or celebrated for it, it's okay to talk about it. If I talk about it, then people will not ask the questions. As for being pear-shaped or even talking about it, I think even before you say these terms, people remind you how you look. I like to claim it before they say anything.

A lot of people use the term 'body positivity' casually. What all does it entail?
It just means all bodies are valid and to not minimise someone for their body. I think it is to also subvert what you normally believe as the standard or the conventional body type. As a person who wants to be known more about her talent versus her body, I'm more body neutral. And honestly, I don't remind myself of my body every single time; people I work with remind me. I would like a world where people would not talk about bodies; I think that would be great!

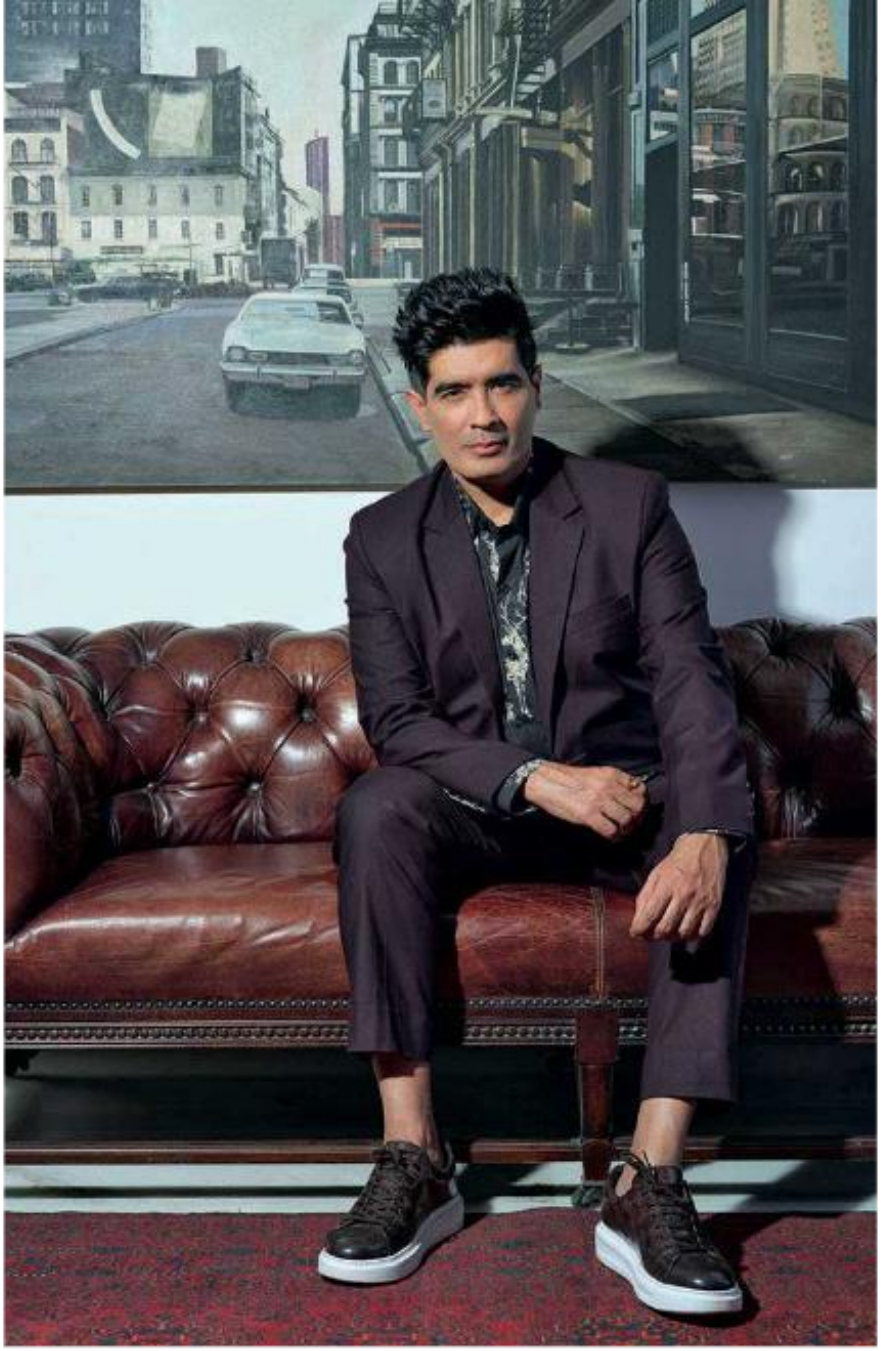
How does travel help you as a content creator?
Travel is a break from monotony. I think every single time I've travelled, I have also connected with myself. One of the biggest things I like about travelling is meeting people because a lot of times, I meet people who inspire my characters. Travel for me is just opening up fully—spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

Any message for women who struggle to break out of certain beauty standards?
In my quest to not conform to beauty standards, I have criticised people who conform to beauty standards, which I think is counterproductive. Now, I've broken away from that. Learning doesn't happen by going into extremes. It happens when you understand the context, nuances, and live experiences.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Favourite Travel Destination in India
Shillong.

Favourite Travel Companion
Zorawar [Singh Ahluwalia, my husband], of course!



INDIAN COUTURE

Manish Malhotra

Couturier

Over the years you have done a great job of showcasing Indian couture, how do you think this space has evolved?
The past few years have redefined the word 'couture'; it's more than just a physical product of privilege. Brands are nurturing and building lasting relationships and making clients feel they're a part of something crucial. In the newer times, from viewing the product digitally and connecting with its brand story to physically acquiring, the process has become personal. And that's how every consumer wants to feel; when life seems short, they want to invest in something valuable and everlasting.

Indian couture has found a place on the global fashion map. What more can be done to consolidate this position?
In a growing technology-run and globalised world, people are forgetting traditional crafts. Due to this, Indian artisans and their art are losing grip. Consequently, we design timeless and seasonless collections that meet the requirements of new-age customers and simultaneously preserve and protect the artisans' livelihoods.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Best place in India for traditional textiles
Every state or city has its own textile hub, comprising thousands of clusters that beautifully weave and give us the most beautiful fabric. *Chikankari*, one of our signatures originates from Lucknow, pashmina from Kashmir, *kalamkari* and *ikat* from Andhra Pradesh, Banarasi silk from Varanasi, and so much more.

Favourite fashion destinations
From India, Delhi and Northeast have an amazing fashion audience. Paris is a sartorial hub, Dubai is quite futuristic, New York is experimental, and Istanbul is creative.

There are various fashion-for-cause initiatives that you are associated with like Mijwan. Tell us more about it.
Our constant quest is to promote the artisans of India through every possible business I venture into whether it's couture, jewellery, or movies. We tied up with Mijwan Welfare Society a decade ago for the women of the region to find a sense of purpose and have a stable employment opportunity. Over the years, the number multiplied and the community grew. These artisans are the breadwinners of their families now.

The road ahead for Manish Malhotra couture?
We're bringing additional changes and innovations to the platter. Expansion plans with stores, audiences, and customers are on the way. With beauty, jewellery, virtual store, and NFT already on the horizon, I plan on taking these ventures to newer heights. We will soon widen our label's physical reach beyond Indian borders.

COMMUNITY TOURISM

Mrinalika And Akshita Bhanj Deo

Directors of The Belgadia Palace

What were the main challenges of turning the 200-year-old Belgadia Palace into a boutique hotel?
Mrinalika: A major challenge was working without a conservationist or museum curator, since antique pieces needed to be catalogued, researched, and styled keeping a contemporary decor approach in mind. A special challenge was getting skilled labour to work with the ceiling—it is nearly 50 feet.

What are some of the sustainable practices and community initiatives that are adopted at The Belgadia Palace?
M: Belgadia was restored keeping in mind that travel can be a means of sustainable development and that homes can be seen as a platform with social impact. We preserve and create awareness about local flora and practise edible landscaping. The property has a towel and linen reuse programme, which saves water by over 40 per cent, along with usage of only glass bottles, ceramic mugs, and refillable refreshment containers. As for community initiatives, we support nutritional climate resilient agriculture. We've tied up with Odisha Millet Mission, a branch of Odisha Agriculture Department, to procure millets from local self-help groups to promote livelihoods via nutritional farming. Additionally, all our staff have been hired regionally, many of whom are in their first hospitality role, so that the economic benefits of tourists stay within the community. We also have tie-ups with Project Chhauni, Mauna Dhwani Handloom School, Mayurbhanj Art Foundation, Sabai Grass Communities, and Dokra Handicraft Villages to promote business and provide an alternative livelihood from eco-tourism.

What are your recommendations for tourists who come to Mayurbhanj?
Akshita: I recommend trying the local delicacies, such as red ant chutney and *mudhi mangsho* (mutton curry with puffed rice) and Simlipal wild raw honey fresh from the forest. One should also take a walk through the local *haat* in and around Simlipal, which is the best place to forage organic food and spices.

What kind of travellers are Akshita and Mrinalika? Do you travel together? How do you reconcile differences when you travel together?
We do travel together; we are both adventurous and like to mix backpacking with luxury stays. We can go to the same place, then solo travel for a bit and come back to meet each other.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Favourite destination
Akshita: Jaisalmer
Mrinalika: Bali.

Three travel essentials
Akshita: Chargers, headphones, and a Swiss army knife.
Mrinalika: Phone, lip balm, and a notebook.

BRAND INDIA - DESIGN

Raghavendra Rathore

Designer

Apart from the *bandhgala*, what is your favourite aspect of Indian clothing?
Owing its origins to the heritage clothing worn by aristocracy in court, the waistcoat—a derivative of the *bandhgala*—has become one of the most popular men's outfits in India. The Jodhpuri waistcoat can be paired beautifully with formal pants or tapered slick modern jeans and therefore stands to be the most versatile outfit in my wardrobe.

You were one of the first designers to use the 'Brand India' positioning for an Indian company. What does this mean to you?
Being an ambassador for Brand India Design and Fashion on a global platform, our brand is positioned as a flagbearer of heritage and culture through the traditional craftsmanship that we are known for. We take great pride in taking inspiration from our roots and translating them into heirloom pieces that can be treasured for years.

What is the need of the hour for Indian fashion, according to you? What direction do you see it taking?
The world is making great strides towards sustainability. Interestingly, India was a forerunner in the concept of sustainability stemming from khadi to natural dyes and all things natural. To inculcate this thought and belief not only at the brand level but also amongst the consumers is of utmost importance.

What is in the offing for Raghavendra Rathore, the brand?
As a brand, Raghavendra Rathore Jodhpur has always tried to bring innovation in the realm of fashion and design with a consistent offering of accessories—be it through the integration of new technology, incorporating artificial intelligence, or the ready-to-wear label RR Blue that is a perfect example of fast-moving vibrant styles for a discerning clientele that is aware of classic aesthetics but is looking for chic-contemporary looks.

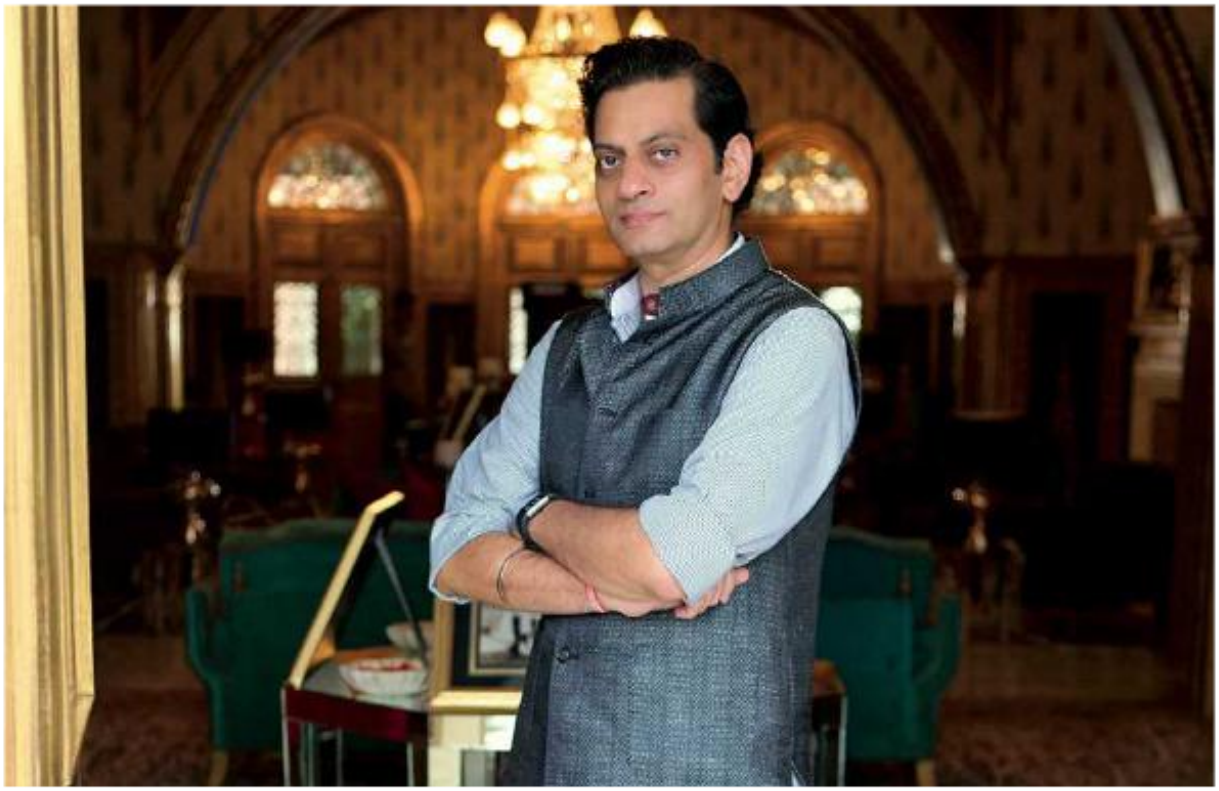
What is the one thing the world needs to learn from Indian fashion industry?
That heritage and culture can create art and in this case, through clothing and accessories.

There is a lot of talk about sustainable fashion. What are your tips for buyers regarding this?
Be conscious and make the effort of being aware of what you are purchasing, and of its journey. You will be surprised how just a little bit of effort can have a greater impact than you can imagine.

CHAMPION'S CHOICE

Favourite fashion destination
Narlai near Ranakpur.

Favourite fashion trend
'30s and '40s fashion style.



Travel + Leisure India & South Asia's annual extravaganza, India's Best Awards, is in its 11th year. And just like every year, this edition too honours the best in the travel, hospitality, and for the first time, lifestyle industry. The winners are chosen by You, our readers, through an online voting process. Here's a look at all the hotels, destinations, airports, airlines, cruises, and brands that wooed our readers and the jury.

BEST CITY

Dubai, UAE

Dubai is consistently ranked among some of the best cities in the world and for good reason. From its glitzy cityscape to world-class culinary offerings, historic neighbourhoods, beach clubs, glamping experiences in the desert and several other attractions that cater to families, honeymooners, adventure enthusiasts and foodies–the list is endless. Worthy new additions include the architectural marvel, Museum of the Future; Hatta Dome Park, where you can glamp in style amidst rugged mountains; Ain Dubai, offering a bird's eye view of the city's gorgeous landscape; and AURA Skypool where you can soak in views of the cityscape from the 360° infinity pool, said to be the highest in the world. *visitdubai.com*

Singapore

Considered to be one of the most tourist-friendly destinations in the world, Singapore ticks all the boxes for a stellar holiday. From Michelin-starred restaurants to hawker-style fare and some of the best bars in Asia, there's no dearth of culinary experiences to try out in this city-state. The nation might be small but packs in a whole lot of things to see and do. Indulge in retail therapy on Orchard Road, explore vibrant neighbourhoods like Katong-Joo Chiat, Little India and Kampong Gelam for street art, hip cafes, and kitschy shops. Soak in the lush greens at Gardens by the Bay, and marvel at shophouses and traditional Peranakan homes that comfortably rub shoulders with modern structures. *visitsingapore.com*

BEST COUNTRY

Switzerland

This Alpine country offers an impressive array of experiences round the year. Its charming medieval towns, glacial lakes, postcard-perfect scenery, and snow-capped peaks have always been a draw for those looking for the quintessential European holiday. Gastronomy is a focal point, with French, German, and Italian influences across regions. The country's wine trails are worth discovering too. Destinations like Lucerne, Basel, Geneva, Interlaken and Zurich are uniquely positioned and blessed with diverse beauty. With ski season underway this winter, the country's ski resort towns like Zermatt, St. Moritz, and Verbier make for a glamorous escape with plenty of winter sports to partake in. *myswitzerland.com*

BEST BEACH DESTINATION

Indonesia

Hideaway beaches, tropical jungles, dramatic vistas, and some of the best surfing spots—these are just a few ways to describe Indonesia's untouched beauty, surrounded by aquamarine hues of the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Bali is one of the most well-known destinations in this archipelago. It makes for a heady escape with its luxury resorts, beach clubs, nightlife and hip cafes promoting clean eats. Island Sumba makes for an idyllic getaway with its palm-fringed beaches, while Lombok is another charming beach escape with spectacular marine life, including the chain of Gili Islands. For a quintessential beach holiday, it's no surprise that this island nation tops the list. *indonesia.travel*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Queensland, Australia

The land down under is blessed with a dramatic coastline, fringed by golden sand beaches, making Queensland one of the most attractive places to visit in Australia. Here, the sun is always shining, the beaches are pristine and chances to spot marine life are superb, and you can swim with whales, ride the waves, and go diving in the Great Barrier Reef. Queensland is also home to the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast. Brisbane, the capital city of Queensland, offers laid-back charm with lots to see and do, from culinary and wine experiences to adventure. With 6,000 kilometres of coastline, there is no dearth of beaches to visit. Popular picks include Noosa beach, Whitehaven beach, and Palm Cove. *queensland.com*

BEST WEDDING DESTINATION

Phuket, Thailand

The Southeast Asian country of Thailand is renowned for its beaches, stunning coastline, and balmy weather all year round, making it the perfect choice for weddings. For those looking to tie the knot, Phuket is a veritable paradise with its pristine shoreline and luxe beachfront resorts.The island offers some of the most surreal sunset views, making for some truly photo-worthy moments for the big day. Whether it's an intimate wedding or a larger-than-life affair, there are properties and venues suited for every budget. What's more? Experienced planners, vendors and chefs specialising in Indian cuisine are easily available to ensure a smooth, hassle-free wedding. *tourismthailand.org*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Saadiyat Island, Abu Dhabi

Home to the iconic Louvre Abu Dhabi, luxury beachfront resorts and miles of soft sand beaches, this picturesque island makes the perfect backdrop for weddings and celebrations. Several of the luxury hotels here are located right on the beach with vistas of turquoise blue waters, making this a preferred choice for nuptials by the sea. So, whether it's a grand celebration with hundreds of guests or something more intimate, the options are aplenty. The island offers lots in terms of recreational activities. Mamsha Al Saadiyat is a vibrant beachfront community with stylish restaurants and cafes serving haute cuisine as well as casual fare and there is choice of beach clubs and several cultural pursuits too. *saadiyatisland.ae*

BEST ROMANTIC DESTINATION

Maldives

Who can resist the charm of the Maldives? Top of the list for honeymooners and couples, this exotic island nation in the Indian Ocean is renowned for its cerulean blue waters, palm-fringed beaches, and lush tropical foliage. Its coral reefs are some of the best in the world, home to a dizzying array of marine life. With the concept of 'one-island, one-resort', Maldives is all about being cocooned in privacy. From luxurious overwater villas to barefoot luxury on the beach, the options for stay are wide and varied. Resorts here also curate one-off experiences, from dining on a secluded sandbank to private yacht cruises, personalised meals to champagne picnics, and indulgent couple spa treatments to movie screenings under the stars. *visitmaldives.com*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Monaco

The Principality of Monaco lives up to its reputation of being a glamorous getaway in Europe. Lying on the Mediterranean Coast with the dazzling blues of the sea for company, its charming architecture, casinos, luxury hotels, beaches and sublime beauty is the biggest draw for revellers looking for a romantic holiday. Discover the old town, palaces, exotic gardens and stroll through the local market at La Condamine selling colourful produce. Visit Monte Carlo and its world-famous casino, stay at lavish, historic hotels and indulge in fine food and champagne. With a disposition apt for the high life, Monaco doesn't disappoint. *visitmonaco.com*

BEST SHOPPING DESTINATION

Bicester Village, London

There's nothing quite like indulging in retail therapy, so a destination housing more than 150 boutiques with designer and luxury brands is truly a dream come true. Make use of the dedicated concierge team and personal shopping services at the Village. Located in the countryside, just an hour away from London, it makes for a convenient day visit. When you're not busy shopping, sample the culinary offerings that range from upscale restaurants, cafes, and coffee shops and toast to a day well spent with glasses of Veuve Clicquot. The Village also offers services such as virtual shopping. *thebicestercollection.com*

BEST CULINARY DESTINATION

Spain

A visit to this European country isn't complete without sampling its gastronomic delights. With varied culinary influences across its regions, Spain promises a flavour-packed holiday. Specialities include paella, tapas, Iberian ham, churros, Spanish wine, olives, cheese and much more. The capital city, Madrid, is home to gourmet food markets, slick bars, and eateries. Barcelona's creative spirit spills over into its culinary offerings with well-known Catalan dishes, while cities like Valencia and Seville are equally popular for foodies. Spain is also home to centuries-old wineries, so exploring its wine regions should be added to the list of things worth doing. *spain.info*

France

France offers infinite reasons to explore its nuanced culinary offerings—after all, food is a way of life here. The country is known for its gourmet meals, be it street-side fare or Michelin-starred restaurants. From exquisite pastries, croissants, and baguettes to cheese and fine wine, there is enough and more to satiate one's taste buds. Paris is home to a multitude of specialty restaurants and cuisines. Lyon is often dubbed as the capital of French gastronomy. And who can forget wine? Regions like Bordeaux, Champagne, Alsace, and Burgundy offer scenic wine routes and are home to some of the oldest wineries in the world. *france.fr*

BEST FAMILY DESTINATION

Qatar

This peninsular Arab nation uniquely straddles the old and the new, where historic souks and traditional architecture are juxtaposed with glitzy skyscrapers and modern structures. Doha, the capital city, is home to iconic landmarks like The Pearl housing upscale eateries, malls, a marina, and luxury hotels. There is also the impressive Qatar National Library and Souq Waqif. Positioned as one of the most family-friendly destinations, there is much to see and do here. Pack in activities that range from a family tour at the Museum of Islamic Art, visiting the Desert Falls Water and Adventure Park, Katara Village, and going on a desert safari. The options are endless. *visitqatar.com*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Australia

Home to dramatic coastlines, the Outback, stunning islands, and buzzing cities, Australia offers several compelling reasons to visit. Cities like Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, and Brisbane are packed with things to see and do with the family. Go beach hopping on the Gold Coast and visit theme parks along the way, take a road trip along Victoria's Great Ocean Road to the Grampians, go on a ferry ride in Sydney to admire its many landmarks, and learn to catch waves at Bondi Beach. While Kangaroo Island is ideal for a dash of adventure, Canberra is one of the most kid-friendly cities. Australia offers enough and more reasons for a memorable family vacation. *australia.com*

BEST ADVENTURE DESTINATION

Virginia, USA

Blessed with a topography that ranges from mountains and gushing rivers to beaches and hiking trails, this mid-Atlantic state, between New York and Florida, caters to adventure enthusiasts of all kinds. The great outdoors beckons with activities like kayaking, biking, paddle boarding, hiking the Appalachian trail, exploring ATV trails, and camping outdoors. Road trips are one of the best ways to discover this beautiful state, especially scenic drives such as Blue Ridge Parkway and the 169-km Skyline Drive. During winters, the state's ski resorts are a popular getaway offering great opportunities for cross-country skiing, ice skating, tubing, snowmobiling, and more. *virginia.org*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

New Zealand

Think of New Zealand, and adventure is one of the first few things that comes to mind. In fact, New Zealand is often dubbed as the home of adventure tourism. Once-in-a-lifetime experiences include skydiving over picturesque landscapes, heli-skiing, glacier hiking, and canyoning in remote mountain locations. If that's not enough, there is ziplining, bungee jumping, off-roading, caving, kite surfing, and many more activities that are enough to give an adrenaline rush. Queenstown, Wanaka, and Auckland are some of the best places to experience adventure. *newzealand.com*

BEST CULTURAL DESTINATION

Abu Dhabi, UAE

The capital city of the UAE, Abu Dhabi may not be as glitzy as its neighbouring emirate but offers charm in spades. Literally meaning 'land of the gazelle' in Arabic, the city is an intriguing mix of history, culture, stunning islands, and heritage monuments that are a sublime contrast to the cosmopolitan high-rises framing the cityscape. A must-visit is the iconic Louvre Abu Dhabi, located in the heart of Saadiyat Cultural District on Saadiyat Island. Also worth seeing are the Al Wathba fossil dunes and the House of Artisans to get a sense of the emirate's maritime history and activities like pearling, fishing, etc. Round up the experience with a taste of traditional Emirati cuisine. *visitabudhabi.ae*

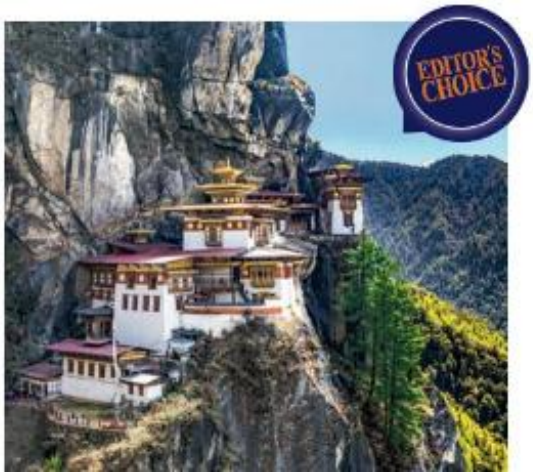
Japan

The land of the rising sun serves a generous dose of culture. Be it in the local markets, its ancient shrines and temples, traditional tea ceremonies, onsens or hot springs, forests, or at a sumo wrestling match—Japan is a veritable treasure trove of cultural experiences. Plan a trip to Kyoto, the old imperial capital city, where you can stay in a traditional *ryokan*, or Nara, which is home to famous shrines and the Nara Deer Park. Book a stay in a temple, try out the traditional crafts, or visit the Japanese theatre to get a taste of the country's rich heritage. *japan.travel*

BEST EMERGING DESTINATION

AlUla, Saudi Arabia

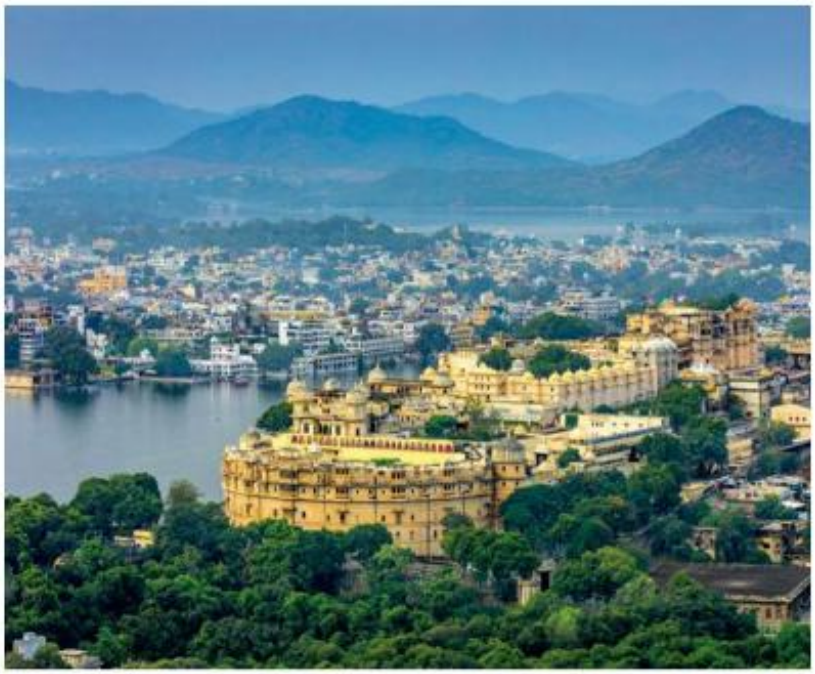
This historic destination has emerged as a strong contender on the tourist map with its ancient tombs, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, a living outdoor museum, oases, and culture steeped in history. Located in the Northwestern region of the country, AlUla promises a walk down primitive trading and historical routes. The city of Hegra is home to ancient ruins and well-preserved tombs and was once part of the incense route. The old town is an exceptional heritage site, while Jabal Ikmah is an open library in a remote canyon valley, with inscriptions and carvings lining cliff faces and rocks. Stay at luxury, boutique resorts to make the most of the spectacular setting. *experiencealula.com*



Bhutan

The tiny Himalayan Kingdom is nearly 70 per cent forested, punctuated by imposing mountains and deep gorges, monasteries, and picturesque villages and towns. It is also the first carbon-negative country in the world. The landscapes vary from snow-capped peaks to valleys, mountain glaciers, and pine-forested hills. Thimphu, the capital city offers a rich cultural tapestry, with thrilling adventure activities, while Paro is home to the iconic Tiger's Nest. Whether you're looking for something tranquil like meditating, hot stone bathing or more adventurous pursuits like mountain biking, white-water rafting, and trekking, there is something for every traveller here. *bhutan.travel*

BEST STATE



Rajasthan

Home to myriad cultures, Rajasthan, also known as the 'Land of Kings', is an Indian destination that should be on everyone's bucket list. Learn about the golden era of Rajasthan's history while exploring majestic forts like Mehrangarh, Amer, and Chittorgarh; pay a visit to significant religious monuments like Dilwara Jain Temple in Mount Abu, Karni Mata Temple in Udaipur, and Brahma Temple in Pushkar; and marvel at the splendour of structures like Jal Mahal, Moti Mahal, Mehrangarh Fort, and Umaid Bhawan Palace. Head to the Pushkar, Kite, and Kumbalgarh festivals to soak in the state's culture. Rajasthan is also particularly delightful for wildlife enthusiasts with Ranthambhore National Park and Tiger Reserve and Keoladeo Ghana National Park. A jungle safari in the Sariska Tiger Reserve is also an exciting experience. *rajasthan.gov.in*

BEST WEDDING DESTINATION

Kerala

A destination known to effortlessly fuse tradition with modernity, Kerala has become the perfect setting for couples to tie the knot. Whether you want your wedding to be an intimate affair or an extravagant one, God's own country offers some of the best venues. Choose from sprawling resorts on the tranquil stretch of lush backwaters of Kumarakom and Munroe Island, or the balmy beaches of Varkala, Kovalam and Kollam that are an ideal setting for your picture perfect wedding. Plan to say 'I do' on a romantic houseboat making its way through the shimmering waters of Alappuzha, or for couples who love the hills, properties set on the tea gardens of Munnar and Wayanad can turn into a magical wedding venue. *keralatourism.org*

BEST ROMANTIC DESTINATION

Goa

With its pristine coastline and rich Portuguese architecture, Goa is probably every couple's dream destination. While villages like Verem and Aldona are ideal to enjoy a calm and quiet vacation, beaches like Lover's Beach or Butterfly Beach are perfect for water babies. Couples who love to party must not miss the happening nightclubs of North Goa. If you are a culture buff and love history, head to landmarks of Old Goa, like the Basilica de Bom Jesus and St Catherine's Chapel. Do not miss out on a romantic ferry ride on river Mandovi. You can also go island hopping with your partner in the sunshine state. There are also many wellness resorts in Goa if you want a rejuvenating holiday with your lover. *goa-tourism.com*

BEST WELLNESS DESTINATION

Uttarakhand

Renowned for being a spiritual wellness destination, 'Devbhoomi' Uttarakhand rejuvenates and revitalises the soul with its innumerable Ayurvedic spas and yoga retreats that promise to stimulate the five senses. Endowed with rolling hills, snow-capped Himalayan peaks, dense woods, serpentine rivers, lush meadows, and age-old temples, Uttarakhand provides travellers with respite from the hustle and bustle of city life. Soak in the tranquility of lesser-explored gems like Abbott Mount and Bhimtal. For those who seek healing, the state is blessed with an abundance of pilgrimage sites like Haridwar and Rishikesh. The state's unique combination of the Himalayas, river Ganga, mythical legends, and ancient healing practices leads to complete revitalisation of the body, mind, and soul. *uttarakhandtourism.gov.in*

BEST SPIRITUAL DESTINATION

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu has long been a melting pot of religions. Travellers from all over the world have discovered spiritual rejuvenation in the state that is home to approximately 33,000 ancient temples that represent the Dravidian architectural style. Most of these temples, like Ramanathaswamy Temple in Rameswaram or Meenakshi Temple in Madurai are not only sacred places, but are also architectural marvels. They are not only known for their design and sculptures but also for constant activities—pujas, festivals and feasts—on their premises. Tamil Nadu is also home to famous churches like Santhome Church, Velankanni, and a Shia mosque called the Thousand Lights Mosque that is located at the junction of Mount Road and Peters Road in the Royapettah neighbourhood. *tamilnadutourism.tn.gov.in*

Uttar Pradesh

With a rich spiritual heritage, the state of Uttar Pradesh is home to pilgrimage sites such as Prayagraj (Sangam), which hosts the Kumbh Mela every six years and the Mahakumbh every twelve years. Varanasi is one of the world's oldest living towns, and its antiquity is mentioned in ancient scriptures, it is a sacred sanctuary for Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists. and is known for its many ghats on the banks of the river Ganga. Mathura-Vrindavan is Lord Krishna's residence and holds immense religious significance among Hindus. Chitrakoot is revered in Hindu mythology for its religious significance and close association with the epic Ramayana. A variety of festivals such as Ganga Mahotsav and Rama Deepotsav also find home in the holy state. *uptourism.gov.in*

BEST WILDLIFE DESTINATION

Madhya Pradesh

The national parks and tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh serve as home to a large variety of flora and fauna. Kanha National Park located in the Maikal Hills of the Satpuras is home to some 22 species of mammals that include Royal Bengal tigers. It is also respected globally for saving the *barasingha* from near extinction. Panna National Park is home to seven of the nine vulture species, as well as over 285 bird species and a significant leopard population. The Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh was the first in India to offer tourists a hot air balloon safari. Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* was inspired by the Pench National Park that is home to more than 285 types of birds and a large population of leopards. *mptourism.com*

BEST ECO DESTINATION

Odisha

Odisha's dense forests, mountains, valleys, waterfalls, gorges, and soaring peaks are home to spectacular fauna. Elephants, tigers, leopards, hyenas, *sambar*, spotted deer, wild boar, giant squirrel, crocodile, jungle cats, hornbills, and numerous migratory birds are among the major fauna of the state. For those seeking to explore untamed landscapes sustainably, Odisha offers a lot of opportunities, from camping and eco resorts like Eco-Retreat Konark and Eco-Retreat Hirakud to trekking and birdwatching in Bhitarkanika and Debrigarh Nature Camp. The water bodies in the state such as Chilika Lake and Duduma waterfall will leave you mesmerised. *odishatourism.gov.in*

Sikkim

Located close to India's Siliguri Corridor near Bangladesh, Sikkim is the least populated and second smallest state in India. A part of the Eastern Himalayas, it is known for its biodiversity, alpine and subtropical temperatures, as well as being home to Kanchenjunga, India's highest mountain and the third highest on the planet. Sikkim's dense forests, hills, and mountains are home to a wide range of animal species, including musk deer and red pandas, as well as *bharal* or blue sheep, the Himalayan black bear, and the rare snow leopard. Many of these are endangered or vulnerable as a result of encroachments and climate change. However, the natural riches are protected by the people of Sikkim that created history by becoming the world's first entirely organic state. *sikkimtourism.gov.in*

BEST ROAD TRIP DESTINATION

Himachal Pradesh

The quaint towns, snow-capped peaks, green rivers cutting through deep gorges, and lush meadows of Himachal Pradesh are best enjoyed on a road trip through the state. The state has a large road network that passes through some of the most beautiful sceneries in the country. There are several choices when it comes to road tripping in the state, the route from Shimla to Manali, Chandigarh to Dalhousie, and Kullu to Rohtang Pass are all unique and scenic. Many hidden gems can be discovered during such road trips. Churah and Spiti Valley are two offbeat destinations that will captivate you with their pristine beauty. *himachaltourism.gov.in*

BEST CULTURAL DESTINATION

Gujarat

Gujarat is home to historical city ruins, palaces, forts, and tombs that are a testament to the different dynasties who lived there. Massive forts like Bhadra Fort, enchanting havelis like Kusum Vilas, stunning stepwells like Adalaj and Bai Harir Ni Vav, are some of the major attractions. When it comes to food culture, Gujarat has a variety of dishes to pick from including *farsan*, *fafda*, *khakhra*, *patra* among others. The state also boasts a broad array of arts and crafts like embroidery, beadwork, wood crafts, printed and woven clothing, ceramics, and tribal art. *gujarattourism.com*

BEST REGIONAL CUISINE

West Bengal

West Bengal is widely known for its sweet and savoury delicacies. The state offers a good mix of non-vegetarian and vegetarian dishes. There is more to Bengali cuisine than the *maach aar bhaat* (fish and rice) and *kosha mangsho*. Bengali cuisine includes a broad variety of dishes that are consumed in different regions, festivals, and seasons. Bardhaman-*er* Sitabhog, for instance is said to be one of the favourite sweets of goddess Sita. This recipe is famous in the Bardhaman district of West Bengal. Joynagar-*er* Moya is a seasonal Bengali sweetmeat delicacy prepared from date palm jaggery and puffed rice. Other dishes that bring out the diversity of Bengal are *bhetki paturi*, *bhapa ilish*, *chingri maacher malaikari*, *bardhaman-er langcha* and *krishnanagar-er sarbhaja*. The cuisine is an assimilation of best of world gastronomy and India's diverse cookery. *wbtourism.gov.in*

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL

Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld

Located in the bustling heart of Bangkok, Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld is ideal for those who love to be at the centre of all action–be it corporate events, shopping, or sightseeing. The 55-storey hotel is easily accessible by public and private transport and offers city experiences with the comfort of resort living. The wellness programme at the 26th floor SPA Cenvaree is a blend of modern practices, traditional therapies, and Eastern and Western wellness philosophies. With 505 newly renovated rooms, five F&B outlets and an expansive convention centre, Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld is also a great choice for corporate events. *centarahotelsresorts.com*

BEST THEME PARK

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi

Ferrari World Abu Dhabi is for those in love with automobiles and speed. The only Ferrari-branded theme park in the world, it is also the world's largest indoor theme park and offers multiple entertainment options. Home to the world's fastest rollercoaster, the highest loop ride, the tallest space-frame structure ever built on the planet, and over 40 record-breaking attractions, this is the ultimate destination for non-stop fun. Ferrari World Abu Dhabi also offers milder rides for young guests. Given the Italian connection, the park has many Italian themed restaurants that offer authentic delicacies. On your way out, pick up a souvenir from the Ferrari Store, which will remind you of your trip forever. *ferrariworldabudhabi.com*

Universal Studios Singapore

At Universal Studios Singapore, experience cutting-edge rides, shows, and attractions based on your favourite blockbuster films and television series! Located strategically at Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore, the park's six themed zones take you to different worlds–from the fairy tale kingdom of Far Far Away with castles, green ogres, a talking donkey, and magic potions to Ancient Egypt with an indoor coaster ride into total darkness. While here, step into the centre of the entertainment universe where an eye-catching collection of eateries and shops line the streets of Hollywood. Have a despicably good time with Gru and your favourite Minions from Illumination's *Despicable Me* and roll out and feel like you're in the movies with TRANSFORMERS: Voices of Cybertron! Ask Optimus Prime about joining his forces and speak to the intimidating Megatron–if you dare–and be awed as they react to you in real time. Spend a day at this award-winning theme park and check into one of the many luxurious hotels within Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore, the Best Integrated Resort, and make a staycation out of your trip. *rwsentosa.com*

BEST INTEGRATED RESORT

Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore

Resorts World Sentosa, Singapore has been the face of entertainment for decades and continues to attract travellers from across the world. Spread across 121 acres, Resorts World Sentosa is home to some of the world's most popular tourist attractions like Universal Studios Singapore, S.E.A. Aquarium, Dolphin Island, and Adventure Cove Waterpark. The premises also house six luxury hotels, each different from the other, a world class convention centre, and exclusive, high-end fashion and lifestyle retail stores. The multiple dining options here include everything from casual restaurants to fine dining experiences, such as Ocean Restaurant, where you can dine in the company of majestic manta rays and 40,000 marine animals. *rwsentosa.com*

BEST LEISURE HOTEL

Kimpton Maa-Lai Bangkok

Kimpton Maa-Lai Bangkok is a quaint, chic, and luxurious space located by the Lumphini Park in Bangkok. Overlooking lush tropical greenery, Kimpton Maa-Lai Bangkok offers all modern amenities like a stunning infinity pool, stylish common spaces, and understated guest rooms. The guest rooms are adorned with organic material and traditional Thai arts and crafts while keeping the modern and minimalist design intact. The property also offers accessible rooms that are equally luxurious; as well as pet- friendly rooms and spaces for those who like to take their furry babies along. The four dining outposts offer exquisite F&B options and guests can also opt for private experiences like a cooking class, painting workshop, private meal, etc. *kimptonmaalaibangkok.com*

Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi

An island hideaway, Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi defines understated luxury. Surrounded by deep blue water and soft white sand, the villas, both hybrid and exclusively over water, are uber chic and set in private enclaves. You can relax in a hammock overlooking the azure sky or plunge into your private pool with a view of the ocean. If you are the sporty kind, a host of water sports like parasailing, windsurfing, paddle boarding, and diving await you. The spa at Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi offers treatments like massages, scrubs, and Maldives' first Aqua Wellness Centre with hydrotherapy pool, ice fountain, steam room, and a sauna. *hilton.com*

BEST HOTEL FOR WEDDINGS

Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort

Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort is for those who want to wed in style. A pristine beach, multiple indoor and outdoor spaces and wedding services help you plan the perfect wedding. Located just 30 minutes from Abu Dhabi International Airport, the resort offers 296 rooms, suites, and villas and multiple dining options. The indoor ballroom can accommodate upto 350 guests and The Lounge Terrace overlooking the crystal-clear waters of the Arabian Gulf accommodates 200 guests. While together they offer a picture-perfect setting for your special day, your guests have plenty to indulge in during the stay: the sunset afternoon tea on the boardwalk, spotting the humpback dolphin in the ocean, or spending a day at the luxurious hammam at the wellness centre. *jumeirah.com*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa

Few places offer natural beauty like JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa does. Located by the pristine Khak Khuk Beach of the Andaman Sea in southern Thailand, JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa is a tropical paradise that boasts naturally beautiful spaces and Thai inspired smart indoor set-ups for a modern wedding. If you like the outdoors, Khak Khuk Beach, facing the glorious sunset, is a great venue to read your vows; if you prefer chic indoors, the halls can accommodate over 800 guests. Dining services here are diverse and unique and seasonal ingredients from the JW Garden are integrated into every menu; from Far Eastern to European your guests can relish every cuisine here. *marriott.com*

BEST WELLNESS RESORT

JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa

Located by the tranquil waters of Shaviyani Atoll, JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa is suited perfectly for a dreamy luxurious wellness retreat. From calming to rejuvenating, healing to pampering, JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa offers numerous treatments and wellness options that help you revitalise mind, body, and spirit. The suites and villas here offer uber luxurious island life with private pools and uninterrupted views of the ocean. However, it is the resort's exclusive Spa by JW, with its signature wellness programmes, that renews, re-energises and reinvigorates you. The Ultimate Maldivian Signature Hand and Foot Rituals offered at JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa complete the wellness journey perfectly. *marriott.com*

BEST HOTEL LOYALTY PROGRAMME

ALL – Accor Live Limitless

With 43 participating brands ALL – Accor Live Limitless is one of the biggest loyalty programmes by Accor. It harnesses and enhances the brands, services, and partnerships offered by the Accor ecosystem. ALL delivers meaningful experiences and rewards to its most engaged customers while enabling them to work live, and play far beyond their stay, at home and around the world. Thanks to this rich value proposition, Accor is bringing its augmented hospitality strategy to life with new digital platforms, iconic partnerships and a global roll-out plan for all its guests and loyalty members. *all.accor.com*

Marriott Bonvoy

With 30 marquee brands participating, Marriott Bonvoy, Marriott International's loyalty programme, is among our readers favourite. The benefits range from exclusive member only rates and deals on the participating hotels, access to the member-only app that unlocks multiple benefits, to exclusive services just for the members. The basic membership gets you complimentary rooms and Wi-Fi while the lifetime membership offers points that never expire and nights in the most exclusive properties. Other than the stay, you can earn reward points when you shop, eat out, and travel with their partner brands, and use them in exclusive events like musical concerts, sporting events, theatre, and more. *marriottbonvoy.com*

BEST INTERNATIONAL HOTEL GROUP

Marriott International

Marriott International's classic brands and time-honoured hospitality are ideal for the modern traveller who appreciates memorable experiences and a unique perspective while travelling. Offering the most powerful portfolio in the industry, its 30 brands and 8,000+ properties across 139 countries and territories give people more ways to connect, experience and expand their world. Guided by a sustainability and social impact platform, Serve 360: Doing Good in Every Direction, Marriott International commits to creating positive and sustainable impact. *marriott.com*

Hilton

A group that boasts 18 distinct hotel brands with over 6,800 locations, Hilton is one of the leading hotel groups in the world. Each of Hilton's brands caters to a different segment and offers extraordinary stays in the world's most sought-after destinations. Hilton's award-winning Hilton Honors guest loyalty programme remains amongst world's finest. Hilton is also a great place to create seamless, stress-free experiences across the many properties that dazzle every kind of traveller. *hilton.com*

BEST LUXURY HOTEL

Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai

Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai stands majestically by the Arabian Gulf overlooking the calm waters on one side and the bustling Dubai skyline on the other. Touted as the crown of the world-famous Palm Island, Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai has been chosen as the Best Luxury Hotel by our readers and remains on the wishlist of many. The ocean inspired rooms here come in several categories including the Signature Suite with views of the underwater world and marine themed sculptures. The Atlantis Kids Club meanwhile is designed for young children as well as teens with multiple entertainment options and activities to choose from. The dining options here include Michelin-star restaurants, casual diners, fine-dining restaurants, beach clubs, and bars. In short there is something for everyone at Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai. *atlantis.com*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Soneva Jani, Maldives

Nestled in the pristine waters of Noonu Atoll in Maldives, Soneva Jani is one of world's lowest density resort. The property has just three island residences, all surrounded by lush tropical forests and 51 overwater residences, which stand in the middle of still turquoise water and boast retractable roofs and water slides. Soneva Jani, with its expansive array of experiences, is ideal for everyone from families with children to young couples and groups of friends. The resort offers exquisite dining destinations including an exclusive plant-based restaurant, a chocolate room, an ice cream room, and private dining choices under the stars. At Soneva Jani you also have access to Soneva Soul, a new, transformative wellness concept blending thousands of years of healing wisdom with the latest science and innovation, and is targeted at individual needs. *soneva.com*

BEST BUSINESS HOTEL

Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida

The sprawling business hotel, located conveniently in the heart of Noida, Radisson Blu MBD Hotel Noida is easily accessible from the business districts of Noida, Delhi, Ghaziabad, and the newly built India Expo Mart. The amenities here include conference facilities for up to 1,000 attendees and five flexible meeting rooms with state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment and free access to Wi-Fi. The 131 rooms in several categories are apt for all kinds of business travellers, be it young executives, busy managers, or jet setting CEOs. The dining options include plush ambience and flavours from across the world. You can choose from a quick bite between meetings or elaborate dinners and drink for post work get-togethers. *radissonhotels.com*

Park Hyatt Chennai

One of Chennai's most iconic hotels, Park Hyatt Chennai stands out as much for its architecture as it does for its business facilities. Designed by George Wong, Park Hyatt Chennai overlooks the beautiful Guindy forest on one side the busy Guindy business and industrial zone on the other, making it ideal for the busy traveller. The 954-square-metre function space here is ideal for conferences, MICE events, and intimate business meetings and its 200 well-appointed yet minimal rooms are well suited for business travellers. The catering services meanwhile offer multi-cuisine specialities—regional Indian and Western to authentic Asian flavours. *hyatt.com*

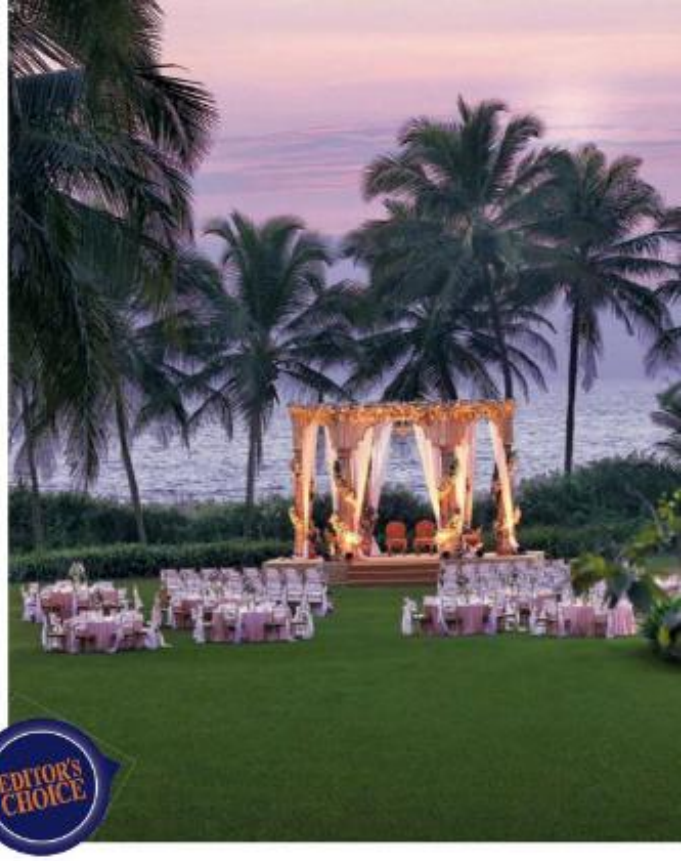
Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport

Situated at a stone's throw from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport remains the destination of choice for business travellers at the national capital region. The multiple halls and meeting rooms at the property can cater to upto 800 guests and include audio-visual equipment, business centre access, and free Wi-Fi. The Ebony meeting rooms with a capacity of 30 guests are suited for smaller meets and conferences and the dedicated business centre, featuring a 12-seat conference room, is bookable by the hour. For post work relaxation the three-level wellness center, R The Spa, offers multiple treatments. *radissonhotels.com*

BEST HOTEL FOR WEDDINGS

The St. Regis Mumbai

The St. Regis Mumbai is a sparkling new property in the heart of Mumbai with an expansive array of 22 event spaces, indoor and outdoor, to cater to all kinds of weddings, and can accommodate up to 1,000 guests. Its 395 luxurious rooms and suites that overlook city's busy Lower Parel neighbourhood reflect understated luxury and offer world-class amenities that take care of all your guest needs. The multiple dining options, including speciality restaurants, bars, and bistros offer world cuisines like Japanese, pan-Asian, Indian, and Spanish and the in-house spa and pool are great for a relaxation post the hectic wedding festivities. *marriott.com*



EDITOR'S CHOICE

ITC Grand Goa

This tropical paradise in the quaint southern part of Goa is an ode to Goan art, architecture, flora, and fauna. The 246-room resort's villas offer plunge pools and private courtyards and reflect ethos of Portuguese-Goan architecture. With direct access to the pristine, sun-drenched Arossim Beach, ITC Grand Goa offers multiple outdoor and indoor venues for bespoke banqueting, special events, and weddings making it the editor's choice in this category. The signature food and beverage offerings include speciality Indian, Asian, Goan, and Italian cuisines apart from robust global fare. Rated as the country's first LEED® Platinum certified resort, ITC Grand Goa ensures that the promise of luxury is upheld without damaging the ecosystem around it. The earthy Kaya Kalp spa is great for a post wedding spa session. *itchotels.com*

Andaz Delhi

The edgy, eclectic, linear, and chic Andaz Delhi is for those who love style. Located in Delhi's Aerocity the 5-star property is accessible by airport and Delhi Metro, and is equidistant from both Delhi and Gurugram, the two main hubs in the capital. Andaz Delhi offers many open spaces—from the oval ball room to the sprawling courtyard and Andaz Studios—and is ideal for both large and intimate weddings. The hotel's 401 rooms and suites, some overlooking the runway and others, the chic Aerocity commercial district, offer all modern amenities and comfortable stay for your guests. What stands out the most is the interesting and innovative dining options that the hotel offers through its outlets like Annamaya, Juniper Bar, and Soul Pantry. *hyatt.com*

BEST HOTEL GROUP IN INDIA

The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts

The hotel group's story began in 1986 with the opening of The Leela Mumbai in 1986. Over four decades, the quintessentially Indian luxury brand has set up 12 premium hotels across India. Each hotel celebrates the region's local history, culture, art, and cuisine through celebratory rituals and immersive experiences, with indulgent stays and state-of-the-art infrastructure. The brand ethos of eight 'Leela Dharmas'—a strict code of conduct drawing from the philosophy of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' (Guest is God)—ensures that every hotel under the group provides an opulent experience. *theleela.com*

Trident Hotels

Founded in 1934, Trident Hotels boasts a repertoire of 10 hotels in India. Since its establishment, the brand has a built a reputation for offering the best of the best through its services and hotels, making it an ideal choice for both business and leisure travellers. Attention to detail and personalised services are what set Trident Hotels apart. Its staff members go through a rigorous programme at The Oberoi Centre of Learning and Development in New Delhi set up in 1966. All Trident Hotels are exceptionally located, close to the airports, railway stations, famous sights, and business districts of top cities in India. *tridenthotels.com*

BEST LUXURY HOTEL

Raffles Udaipur

Raffles Udaipur is a green oasis on a private island in Udai Sagar Lake in Udaipur. With gleaming copper domes and large Palladian windows, the hotel's opulence blends seamlessly with the grandeur and natural beauty of the city. From the private boat that ferries you to the island to Raffles Butlers who will curate enthralling traditional experiences especially for you, every aspect of a stay at Raffles Udaipur is memorable. Whether you want a view of the lake, a gorgeous garden, or a heated outdoor pool with a cabana, the hotel's range of spacious rooms has you covered. *raffles.com*

The Lodhi, New Delhi

Located in the heart of Lutyen's Delhi, The Lodhi has its own unique brand of luxury. Floor-to-ceiling windows in all rooms, spa-style bathrooms in suites, walk-in closets and showers, private balconies—The Lodhi spares no expense in its hospitality. An exclusive Athletic Club offers state-of-the-art Technogym equipment while The Lodhi Spa has a finely curated range of treatments, both Indian and international, along with an exquisite Turkish hammam. Indulge in top-of-the-line hair and skin treatments at Salon, which has its own team of specialists to tackle any concerns. Visit one of its internationally acclaimed restaurants, such as Élan that presents an array of cuisines from around the world with an emphasis on the best of regional Indian and South East flavours. *thelodhi.com*

BEST FAMILY HOTEL

The Leela Palace Jaipur

A mere stone's throw away from the most popular attractions in Jaipur, The Leela Palace Jaipur makes for the perfect base from where you can explore the Pink City with your family. Discover Rajasthan's storied past and Jaipur's vibrant culture, while staying at this luxury address. Its palatial suites and villas ensure a comfortable stay for large families, while its restaurants and bars, like Mohan Mahal, which is inspired by the famous Sheesh Mahal, are great backdrops for family meals. Go on private hot air balloon rides, visit India's first elephant village at Hathi Gaon, or for a little more adventure, explore the serene water bodies of the Aravalli range with a guided trek. *theleela.com*

Trident, Udaipur

Located in the erstwhile capital of the kingdom of Mewar, Trident, Udaipur sits on the banks of Lake Pichola. The hotel is conveniently located near tourist hotspots, enabling you to explore the city's maze of palaces, lakes, temples, and gardens with ease. The elegantly furnished suites, overlooking peaceful gardens, welcome fatigued travellers, while the hotel's main restaurant, Aravalli serves authentic Mewari food. Relax by the poolside or take a stroll in the vast gardens on the property while your little ones are entertained at the Trident Kids' Club. *Tridenthotels.com*

The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa, Gulmarg

Spread over seven acres of forest, The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa sits 2,690 metres above sea level in the Pir Panjal range of the Himalayas. Enjoy panoramic views of the Affarwat Peaks from your very own private cottage. Take your children to Igloo, an activity room stocked with board games and gaming consoles while you head out to the world's highest golf course; or arrange for a family movie night at The Den. Introduce your family to Wazwan, a feast served at Kashmiri weddings at Cloves, the multi cuisine restaurant at the property. *khyberhotels.com*

BEST WELLNESS RESORT

Amal Tamara, Alappuzha

A registered Ayurveda hospital, Amal Tamara follows the concept of Chikitsa Chatushpada, which dictates that the four most important limbs of a treatment protocol—the physician, patient, therapist, and medicine—must work in synergy. The treatment programmes at the property focus on the body's natural ability to heal, while providing a serene atmosphere near the backwaters of Alappuzha in Kerala. Soak in the local culture and cleanse your palate with fresh vegetarian meals prepared according to your need, while the Ayurveda experts design a personalised programme based on your needs, ailments, and body type. *amaltamara.com*

Atmantan Wellness Centre, Pune

Atmantan Wellness Centre talks about three components of existence—atma (soul), mana (mind), and tann (body)—and importance of healing them in unison for deep, lasting change. The resort's philosophies follow those of its founders—Sharmilee Agarwal Kapur, a pranic healer, is an expert on energy medicine and conviction, while Nikhil Kapur, a fitness enthusiast and an ironman triathlete, brings methodical planning to the mix. This NABH (National Accreditation Board of Hospitals & Healthcare Providers of India) accredited wellness centre is the largest in the country to use solar energy as the primary source for heating water. *atmantan.com*

BEST HOTEL LOYALTY PROGRAMME

Club ITC

One of India's most transparent and flexible loyalty programmes, Club ITC has been rewarding members with exclusive benefits for over three decades. Two to five percent of eligible spends at ITC hotels are earned as Green Points (1 Green Point = INR 1), which never expire. Enjoy exclusive members' rates across over 64 hotels pan India, with a chance to earn free stays and room upgrades, along with free fine dining at their award-winning restaurants and rejuvenating therapies at their spas; moving up tiers grants even bigger rewards. Excess room nights and eligible spends are carried over to the next calendar year. *itchotels.com*

CLUB ITC
ENRICHING REWARDING EXPERIENCES

NeuPass

The Taj InnerCircle membership programme has been subsumed into NeuPass, a new membership programme which combines TataNeu and all its partner brands to allow members to earn rewards for purchases made on a large variety of platforms. Current members need not worry, as membership numbers and privileges remain the same, and Taj InnerCircle points have now become NeuCoins (1 NeuCoin = ₹1). A minimum of five per cent NeuCoins are awarded for any eligible spends on TataNeu or any of its partner brands. These coins can be used for shopping, making hotel and flight bookings, ordering food, and much more. *tajhotels.com*

NEUPASS

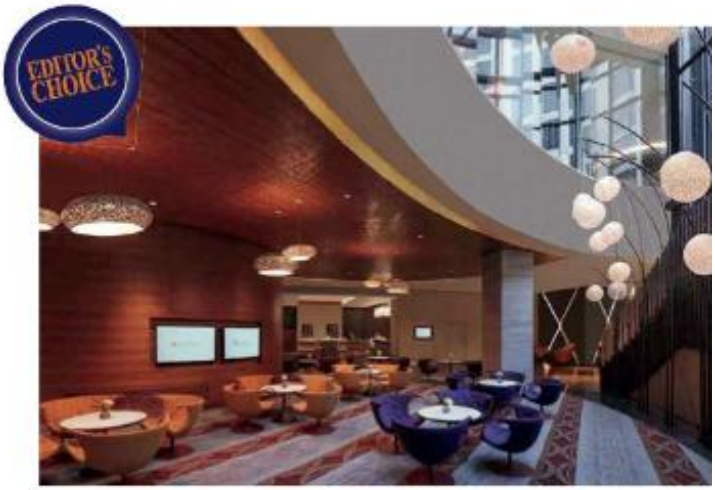
BEST LUXURY BUSINESS HOTEL

JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru

Business meetings and conferences are a breeze to organise at JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru. With a whopping total of 1,245 square metres over 10 event rooms, the largest meeting room in the hotel can seat 500 guests with ease. The state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment—including a 35mm projector, an LCD panel, teleconferencing, video cameras, and overhead projectors—is guaranteed to wow the most discerning business travellers. Need a break from meetings? JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru is conveniently located in the heart of the city, and offers easy access to the city's most popular attractions. *marriott.com*

Conrad Bengaluru

Located right in Bengaluru's Central Business District, Conrad Bengaluru offsets being at the centre of corporate action with peaceful vistas of Ulsoor Lake. The hotel has Executive Boardrooms and Meeting Room, with its total event space being well over 1,951 square metres. Guests staying in executive rooms and suites have exclusive access to the Executive Lounge, which has seating areas for dining, gatherings, business activities and celebrations, and is open from 6:30 am to 11 pm. *hilton.com*



Pullman New Delhi Aerocity

Only 200 meters away from the Delhi Aerocity metro station, Pullman New Delhi Aerocity is perfect for the business traveller on the go. The hotel's unique event planning concept, Co-Meeting believes that great ideas are envisioned when the mind wanders. Business meetings and events can be planned in any of the 13 modular meeting rooms or three boardrooms, with playful elements introduced to kick your imagination into gear—creative interior design, state-of-the-art technology, a high-tech connectivity lounge, and al-fresco breaks in the Courtyard between meetings. *pullmannewdelhi.com*

BEST LEISURE HOTEL AND RESORT

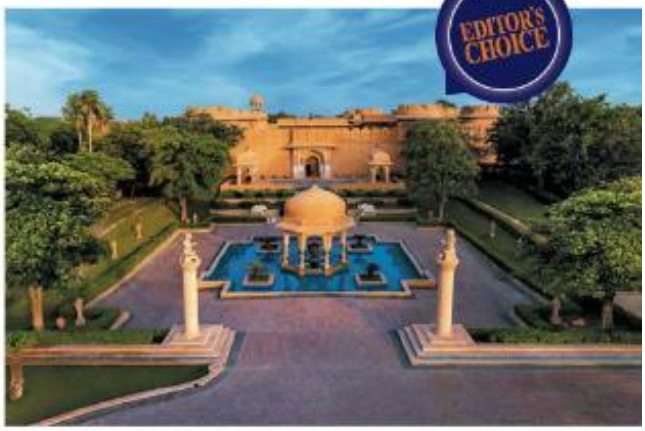
JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa

Spread across 22 acres on the Nandi Hills in Bengaluru, JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa is a world unto itself. Only 20 minutes from the airport and very close to Grover Vineyards and the Devanahalli and Lepakshi Temples, the resort offers five-star amenities including a garden terrace, golf course, bowling alley, 24-hour fitness center, spa, salon, and sauna. Dine at any of their restaurants with a view of their artificial lake and exquisite landscaping. The hotel's numerous spacious rooms with private balconies, and villas with private pools are all pet-friendly, making this an ideal stop for pet owners. *marriott.com*

Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, Mahabalipuram

As opulent as its name suggests, the beachfront Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa is set on the East Coast Road and overlooks the Bay of Bengal. The hotel has plush interiors and a variety of amenities. Of its three restaurants, The Reef offers both buffet and a la carte options for international cuisine; while C Salt offers fresh seafood and South Indian coastal cuisine. Head to Pelican Deck for a delectable BBQ experience. The resort offers over ten types of rooms to choose from, with some offering views of the sea while others offer garden access and private pools. Other amenities include a spa, a fitness studio, a kids' club, recreation lounge, and an infinity pool. *marriott.com*

BEST LUXURY RESORT



The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur

Spread over 1,29,499 square metres, The Oberoi Rajvilas is an ode to the rich, royal past of Jaipur. Its traditional architecture and flaming *mashaals* (torches) are a nod to local heritage. Lounge in its comfortable rooms with traditional decor, or step into the past in one of the resort's luxury tents, which are fully air conditioned and triple canopied. The tents have been inspired by the majestic caravans that used to cross the desert in the past. One of two restaurants on the property, Raj Mahal is particularly interesting for its offering of unusual dishes from the remote corners of India. You can also opt for experiences such as leopard safari, watching the sunset at Naila Fort, or cooking with master chefs. *oberoihotels.com*

BEST BOUTIQUE EXPERIENTIAL HOTEL

Aman-i-Khas, Ranthambore

Located at the edge of Ranthambore National Park, Aman-i-Khas is a luxurious camp with 10 expansive, Mughal-inspired tents overlooking the domain of the majestic Bengal tiger. Each tent is around 108 square metres with a bedroom, living area with daybed, dining area, and a bathroom with a free-standing bathroom and shower. The tents are positioned in a manner that ensures privacy, and come with their own sun decks for you to sit and birdwatch. Partake in one of the several fascinating safaris curated by the hotel, including one to the ancient forts, or go Marwari horseback riding to learn royal history. Spend your time at the camp indulging in spa therapies, swimming, and sampling delicious food. *aman.com*

BEST CONVENTION CENTRE IN A HOTEL

Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre

Situated right next to HITEC City, the IT hub of Hyderabad, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre is close to the offices of industry giants like Google, Amazon, Deloitte, Apple, and Cognizant, among others. That and it sitting adjacent to HICC (Hyderabad International Convention Center)—a state-of-the-art convention facility managed by Accor—make the hotel a popular choice amongst business travellers. The hotel has its own facilities to complement those at HICC—three banquet halls, a ballroom, and landscaped gardens. The hotel is perfect for business travellers seeking relaxation and hearty meals along with the perfect venue for meetings. *novotelhyderabad.com*

Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center

Luxury and sophistication converge at the Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center, conveniently located near major corporations, IT parks, and tourist spots like Bangalore Palace, temples, gardens, and major malls. The hotel is spacious and houses unique restaurants, bars, outdoor pool, fitness centre, and spa. The heart of the hotel, as the name suggests, is the convention center located right next to the hotel's main building. Nearly 1,394 square metres on its own, the Convention Space is perfect for large corporate events, grand weddings and intimate family gatherings. It also has state-of-the-art AV technology, custom catering, and a team of expert event planners. *marriott.com*

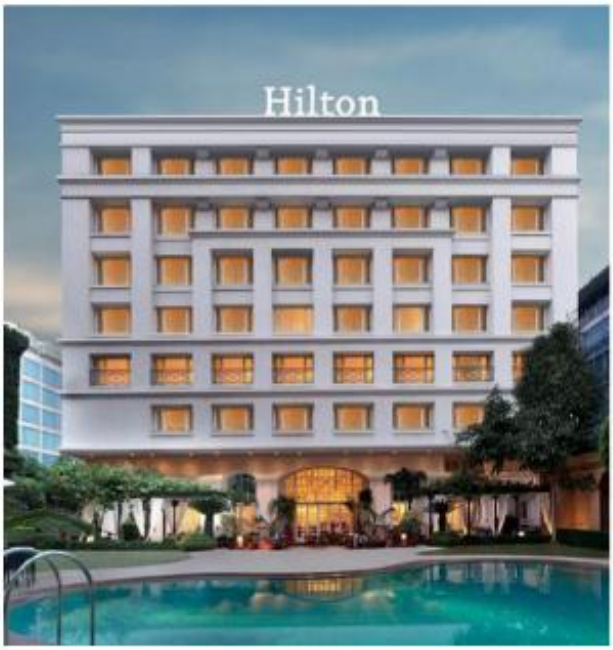
BEST SERVICE IN A HOTEL

Accor

Accor is a leading augmented hospitality group with over 50 hotels in India and South Asia. Familiar brands like Novotel, Raffles, and Fairmont, among others, are under Accor's management; each offering everything from luxurious stays to entertainment, and renowned hotel services. Accor has over 2,30,000 hospitality experts working across countries with over 40 hotel brands, over 10,000 restaurants and bars, in 110 countries internationally to reimagine hospitality. Its vast network of brands, value-added services and loyalty programme allow Accor to reinvent itself in line with the changing needs of its customers and new ways of living, travelling, and working. *group.accor.com*

Hilton

The Hilton name is almost synonymous with luxury, a sentiment that extends to the 18 distinct hotel brands under the company's banner. From luxury stays and staycations to organising events, Hilton never misses a beat. As a conscientious approach to travel, Hilton had launched the LightStay Meeting Impact Calculator which generates a customised estimate of the total carbon emissions, energy and water use, and waste generation for events held at any of their hotels, along with suggestions to reduce your carbon footprint, making it well deserving of this award. *hilton.com*



BEST HOTEL BRAND FOR SERVICE EXCELLENCE

EDITOR'S CHOICE

Oberoi Hotels & Resorts

Started in 1934 by MS Oberoi with the first Oberoi hotel in Shimla, the brand is currently present in seven countries under the luxury Oberoi and five-star Trident brands. The brand ethos 'the guest is everything' shines through its 32 hotels, Nile cruisers, and a motor vessel in Kerala. Despite having many properties around India, each one unmatched in its beauty, what Oberoi Hotels & Resorts prides most on, and what draws the most praise from customers, is the ability to make each guest feel seen, heard, and understood through heartfelt gestures, attention to detail, and personalisation. And these are the reasons why Oberoi wins this year's editor's choice award for Best Hotel Brand for Service Excellence. *oberoihotels.com*

BEST HERITAGE HOTEL

The LaLiT Grand Palace Srinagar

Once the residence of Maharaja Pratap Singh, the erstwhile ruler of Jammu and Kashmir who designed and built it in 1910, The LaLiT Grand Palace Srinagar is located in the eastern part of the city. Surrounded by the craggy peaks of the Himalayas, the palace has vast gardens overlooking the Dal Lake, and looks like something out of a postcard. The royal-residence-turned-resort has seamlessly blended five-star amenities with the grandeur and history of the palace. Guests can choose from 113 elegantly appointed rooms, including ten cottages. Both indoor and outdoor dining options are available, with The Chinar Garden offering a stunning view of Dal Lake and the Srinagar Valley. An all-weather indoor swimming pool, award-winning spa, and well stocked gymnasiums ensure you will never be bored. *thelalit.com*

Neemrana Fort-Palace

Over 500 years old, Neemrana Fort-Palace is a premier heritage hotel of Rajasthan, located near the Delhi-Jaipur highway. The fort, built in 1464, was abandoned at the time of independence. It was painstakingly restored and opened as a resort in 1991. Each of its 77 rooms and suites are steeped in history, spread over 14 levels cut into the hill. The rooms all have unique pieces of history, expressed through artefacts and stories. Efforts have been made to preserve as much of the original architecture as possible while also providing modern amenities. Additional wings in the resort house the pool, spa, amphitheatre, hanging gardens, a restaurant with a well-maintained rooftop garden, and conference halls. *neemranahotels.com*

BEST LUXURY HOMESTAY

Airbnb Luxe

With the launch of Airbnb Luxe, the brand combined two things not usually seen together in hospitality—homestays and luxury on a global scale. Airbnb claims to offer the world's most extraordinary homes with Airbnb Luxe, showcasing expertly designed and carefully vetted homestays with high-end amenities like private pools, saunas, or hot tubs. What makes it the recipient of this editor's choice award is the services of a trip designer that comes with each booking. The trip designer can help you plan other aspects of your stay; such as airport pickups, massages, childcare, equipment rental, personal chef and driver. While Airbnb Luxe does not have any properties in India listed yet, you can pick from several exquisite destinations from across the globe. *airbnb.com*

BEST BLEISURE HOTEL

Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket

Housed inside the DLF Avenue Mall in Saket, Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket is a short stroll from restaurants, shops, and recreation options. It is close to the Qutub Minar tower, Tughlakabad Fort, and the Garden of Five Senses, making it a great place for tourists to stay. One can chill by the poolside or order food from the India Grill restaurant which serves breakfast, lunch, and supper making your stay both deluxe and guilt-free. With a business centre, meeting room, executive suites, and premium bedrooms, the hotel is a favoured choice among both business and leisure travellers making it deserving of this award. *hilton.com*

Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences

At Hyatt Regency Pune & Residences, one can embrace luxury and convenience with plush, tastefully decorated interiors. The hotel, located in the cosmopolitan neighbourhood of Viman Nagar, recapitulates luxury with pet-friendly accommodations, a temperature-controlled indoor swimming pool, and a plethora of culinary options like Pune 14, The Lotus Desk, Zeta, and Single Malt & Co. making it our readers' favourite bleisure hotel. The hotel features 222 spacious rooms overall, including 50 Regency Club™ rooms and 18 exquisite suites. The hotel's closeness to Lohegaon International Airport, the city's top entertainment districts like Koregaon Park, and IT centres like Business Bay make it an excellent choice for business and leisure travellers alike. *hyatt.com*

The Oberoi, Mumbai

The Oberoi, Mumbai offers bird's eye views of the Mumbai skyline. The interiors of the rooms are exceptionally spacious, with wall-to-wall windows, and are dotted with a combination of traditional and contemporary architecture, making them suitable for both business and leisure travellers. There is a wide range of room options—from Ocean View, Bay View, Premier, and so on. Restaurants such as Vetronand Enoteca, Ziya, The Champagne Lounge, and many others provide regional and global cuisines. Business travellers can hold meetings, seminars and dinners at the hotel's function rooms. The extensive business centre offers board rooms and meeting rooms for up to 20 people. *oberoihotels.com*

BEST LUXURY HOTEL CHAIN

ITC Hotels

Since its inception in 1975, ITC Hotels has cemented its position as India's premier luxury hotel chain. Renowned for its exemplary blend of traditional hospitality and global standards of service, the hotel chain today encompasses over 100 hotels in 70 destinations across four brands. Add to that, the commitment, 'Responsible Luxury' as the guiding premise, along with planet positivity; each ITC Hotel is certified with a LEED® (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum rating for globally recognised planet-positive endeavours. *itchotels.com*

BEST NEW HOTEL

ITC Narmada, Ahmedabad

ITC Narmada is an architectural homage to Gujarat's grandeur, inspired by the majestic stepwells of Gujarat. The property won hearts with its undeniably luxurious rooms with hand-picked amenities and decor that pay ode to the culture of Gujarat. Its premium all-day dining multi-cuisine restaurants, such as Adalaj Pavilion, Peshawri, Yi Jing, and more are crowd favourites. The Narmada State Room, with its ample banqueting area, is an excellent setting for a wide range of celebrations, conferences, and events. The hotel also has several sophisticated and stylish conference spaces and boardrooms with cutting-edge facilities.*itchotels.com*

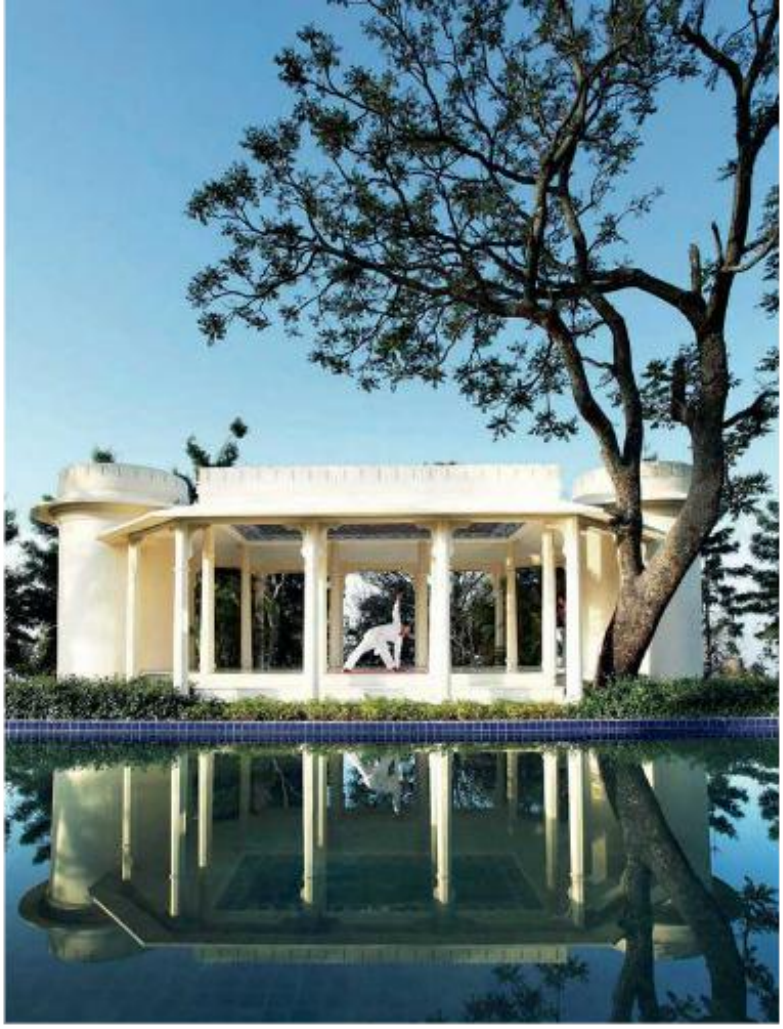
Hyatt Regency Dehradun

Hyatt Regency in Dehradun is tucked away in the Himalayan foothills, overlooking the picturesque Malsi forest and the Himalayan range. It has 263 rooms spread across seven storeys, four separate food and beverage outlets, each with outdoor seating, a Regency Club, Rooftop Pool, Spa & Salon, a Stay Fit Studio, and Camp Hyatt. Including the spectacular Regency Ballroom, Vista Lawns and three spacious studios, one boardroom and the Pinnacle Lounge, Hyatt Regency, Dehradun is spread across 3,115 square metres. Inspired by the hotel's dramatic surroundings, the restaurant Range offers regional, Indian, and international comfort food and beverages in an al fresco setting. The hotel has two bars and a marketplace too. Another restaurant is set to open soon. *hyatt.com*

BEST ECO RETREAT

Ananda In The Himalayas, Uttarakhand

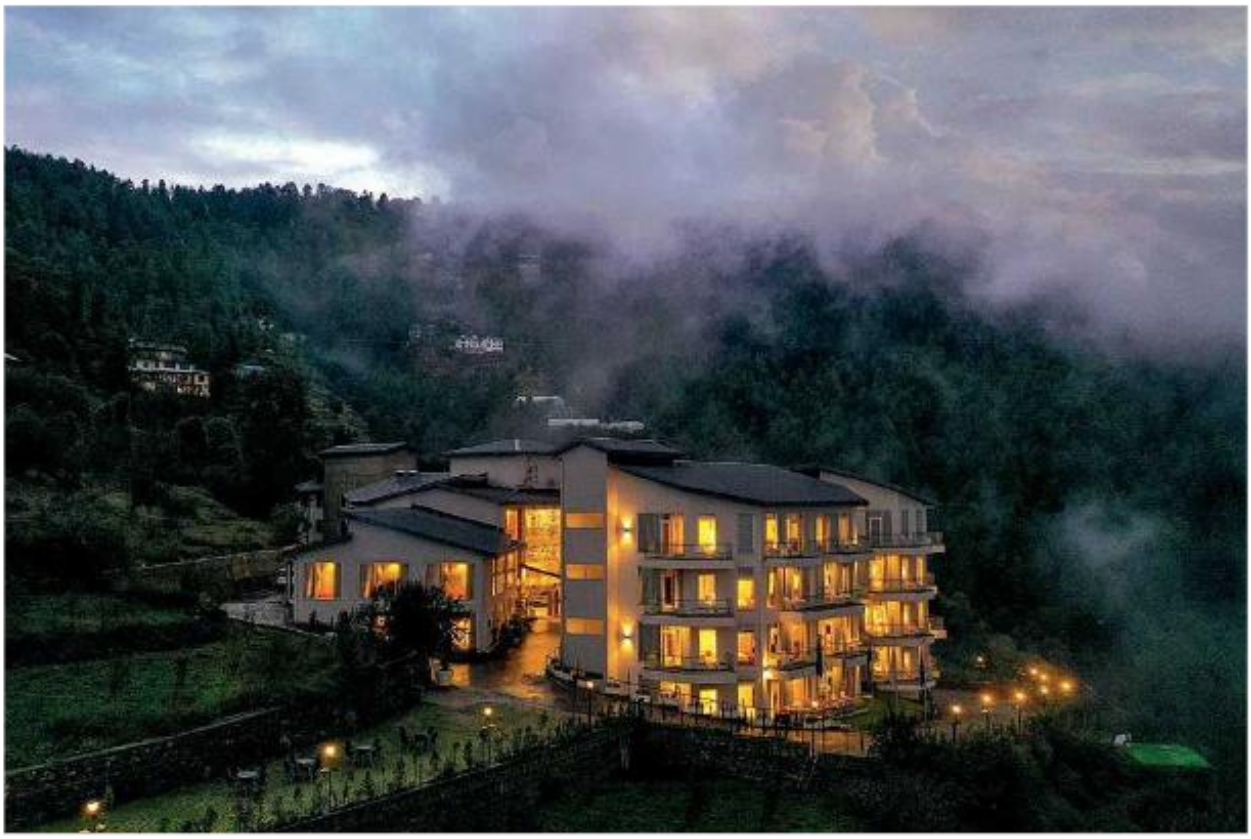
In the foothills of the Himalayas, close to the cultural cities of Haridwar and Rishikesh, sits the luxury wellness retreat Ananda in the Himalayas. Located only a short, picturesque drive from Dehradun Airport, it provides a tranquil view of the Ganga and is surrounded by beautiful sal forests. The property offers a range of activities including yoga and meditation, *pranayama* sessions, nature hikes and treks, sessions with vedic scholars, and private spa treatments for holistic wellbeing. Ananda works primarily on its five wellness pillars namely Ayurvedic and holistic welless, healthy cuisine, yoga and meditation, emotional healing, and spiritual awareness. Various programmes with different durations such as, five, seven, 14 or 21 nights can be availed. The team of therapists, chefs, and Ayurvedic doctors here ensure guests' needs are catered to and create a sustainable journey towards a healthier and more enriched lifestyle. *anandaspa.com*



Aramness Gir National Park

Aramness Gir in Gujarat is the only luxury boutique hospitality offering in the region. Located on the edge of the Sasan Gir National Park and surrounded by a protected teak forest, Aramness Gir is a unique instance of an unspoiled natural wonderland. Their subtle, yet exquisite interiors have been designed to instil comfort and serenity. The property lives up to its name Aramness derived from *aram* which means peace and *ness* which means villages. Its design strikes a delicate balance between traditional influence and nature, drawing inspiration from the beauty of Gujarati villages. The property's original natural forest and meadow gardens have been restored and can be experienced by the guests. *aramness.com*

BEST TIER TWO HOTEL



Welcomhotel By ITC Hotels, Shimla

Welcomhotel Shimla is conveniently located about 10 kilometre from Shimla's popular attractions. It is tucked away among the lower Himalayas' evergreen woodlands. The hotel combines the aesthetics, leisure spirit, and cultural elements of the region to provide guests with an unparalleled experience. Equipped with a wide range of amenities, the hotel is intended to be a peaceful haven of comfort and seclusion. Enjoy breathtaking views of the lush mountains and indulge in relaxing spa treatments, or soak in the serenity of forest bathing and bird calls. At the multi-cuisine cafe, savour local and international flavours, or enjoy a range of drinks at the cocktail bar. *itchotels.com*

Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City

The Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City Hotel is situated at the heart of GIFT City Gandhinagar, the nation's first international financial service centre. It is conveniently situated 17 kilometres away from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport and is close to major firms, government offices, and businesses. A flat-screen 43-inch LED TV, tea and coffee makers, and 24-hour room service are just a few of the many value add-ons available in the 151 beautifully designed rooms of the hotel. The hotel also features all-day dining, a spa, fitness centre, and specialty restaurant. The banquet halls and conference spaces of the hotel are well equipped and tailored for guests' requirements, be it business or social events. *all.accor.com*

BEST DOMESTIC AIRPORT

Indira Gandhi International Airport, New Delhi

It does not come as a surprise that Indira Gandhi International Airport is our readers' choice for best domestic airport. It ranks among the top airports in the world and has always been at the forefront of sustainability. It is the world's first airport to have an ISO 50001-certified Energy Management System. It is home to world-class retail outlets, from Lacoste, Marks & Spencers to Ralph Lauren, and provides myriad of options for a great shopping experience. It is also home to multiple dining venues like The Irish House and Starbucks, and also has ample leisure facilities. The airport has received over 50 awards and accolades for quality and efficiency from across the world. *newdelhiairport.in*

BEST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Singapore Changi Airport

Apart from connecting nations, Singapore Changi Airport has world-class experiences ranging from shopping and dining to recreation and wellness. It is a world in itself, with immersive ventures ranging from Arrival Garden, where you can admire the dragonfly habitat to Butterfly Garden with over 1,000 tropical butterflies belonging to as many as 40 species each season. The airport is also a shopper's paradise with premium brands like Burberry, Bulgari, and Fendi. The airport offers a selection of cuisines from across the world at restaurants like Le Shrimp Ramen and Saap Saap Thai. You can even plan a wedding at the idyllic spots in the airport. *changiairport.com*

Hamad International Airport

Whether you're in transit, arriving, or departing, Hamad International Airport, one of the world's most active hubs, provides a plethora of shopping, dining, and relaxing experiences to improve your journey. Pamper yourself with a world-class duty-free shopping experience at the many beauty and skincare boutiques and brand outlets of Bottega Veneta, Chloé, and Gucci. Enjoy everything from gourmet meals to regular snacks at Burger King, KFC, Ralph's Coffee, and more. The airport also has quiet rooms, spas, and showers for passengers to unwind and detox, making it a haven of hospitality, solitude, and rejuvenation. *dohahamadairport.com*

EDITOR'S CHOICE

BEST INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE

Singapore Airlines

With Singapore Airlines, you'll be travelling in some of the most modern and fuel-efficient aircrafts available. The majority of Singapore Airlines' planes are Wi-Fi-enabled, making it easy to remain in touch with loved ones. The stewardesses are clad in their signature sarong *kebaya*, which was designed by Parisian couturier Pierre Balmain in 1968 as a symbol of Asian hospitality. Step aboard and enjoy the airline's warm and impeccable service, and discover a journey that's every bit as delightful as the destination itself. Singapore Airlines is the world's most acclaimed airline for its commitment to service excellence, and they are well-known for offering an elevated travel experience that both consumers and the industry value. *singaporeair.com*

Emirates

Providing an out-of-the-world flight experience, Emirates is rightly the best international airline. It was the first airline to offer telecoms on all three classes of Airbus aircraft. Apart from delivering unmatched privacy and luxury, it also sets the standard for in-flight entertainment with up to 5,000 channels on its award-winning inflight entertainment system, ice. The chefs take you around the world with gourmet snacks and rich caviar, along with a sumptuous multicourse dinner and movie snacks. In 2020, Emirates was the largest international airline according to IATA's World Air Transport Statistics 2021. *emirates.com*

BEST INTERNATIONAL AIRLINE FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Etihad Airways

Shaped by a rich heritage, Etihad Airways carries the modern and cosmopolitan spirit of Abu Dhabi to the world, along with its old-world charm. On board, you can binge on hundreds of hours of on-demand movies, TV, and music, as well as live sports and news with the inflight entertainment, E-BOX Stream. Every flight includes complimentary dining with flavourful dishes created from locally produced greens. But what makes it the editor's choice is its commitment to sustainability. Its green efforts include reducing single-use plastic, a commitment to zero net carbon emissions by 2050, and relying on electric tractors for baggage and freight loading. *etihad.com*

BEST DOMESTIC AIRLINE

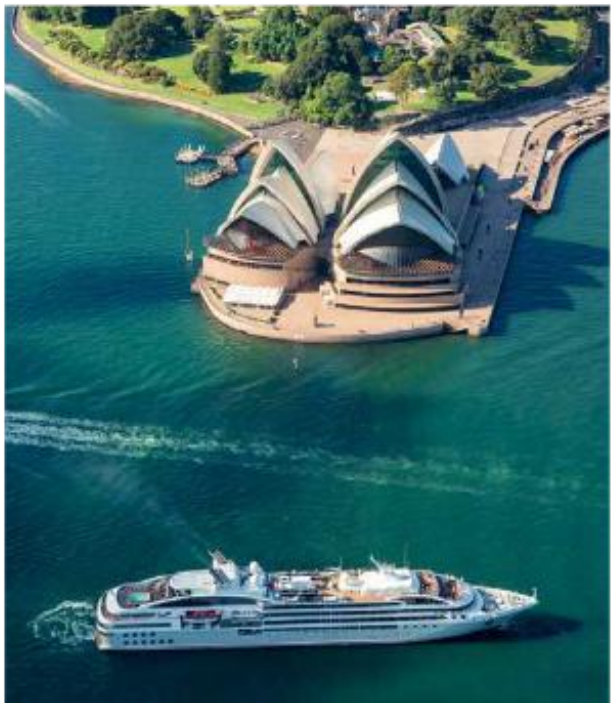
Vistara

Since its maiden flight from Delhi to Mumbai in 2015, Vistara has brought about substantial change in the Indian aviation industry. It introduced the Premium Economy Class, Club Vistara, in-flight WiFi access for international flights, and Vistara Freedom Fares—a menu-based pricing model for a multitude of budgets and travel preferences. The airline also provides exclusive benefits to its patrons while booking directly with them by means of Vistara Direct. It covers over 40 destinations and is India's highest-rated airline, having won multiple 'Best Airline' accolades in addition to being praised for world-class cabin cleanliness and retaining high safety standards. *airvistara.com*

BEST CRUISE & EXPEDITIONS

PONANT

PONANT boasts a diverse fleet—from small yachts to electric hybrid vessels, powered by LNG, and the new-generation small-sized PONANT EXPLORERS. Its unique travel philosophy reinterprets cruising and takes you on polar, tropical and subtropical expeditions. Think savannahs across Africa; the dense vegetation and Maya civilisation remains of Central America; ancient sites in Egypt, Israel, and Jordan; and the spellbinding icy expanse of Antarctica, among others. There are also theme cruises that combine classical music and opera, food and wine, art and museums, theatre and literature, and photography to enrich your travel experience. *en.ponant.com*



BEST AIRPORT LOUNGE

Encalm Lounge

What do you do when you reach the airport earlier than anticipated? You wait around, go shopping, or head to the lounge to relax. Encalm Lounge provides just the right atmosphere for that; it is an oasis of calm at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. Designed by specialists with airport travellers in mind, the lounge provides comfortable seating, food and beverages, newspapers and magazines, Wi-Fi, charging stations, flight information screens, TV screens, and a bar. Enjoy the unique food and beverage menu at the lounge—there is a selection of classic cocktails, chilled beer, tea, coffee, and other beverages to choose from. *encalm.com*

BEST LUGGAGE BRAND

Victorinox

Victorinox is known to many for its Swiss Army knives, but it has also established itself as one of the most coveted names in the luggage industry. With high-end design and high-quality craftsmanship, Victorinox luggage comes in many sizes, colours, designs, and built-in functions. Due to its robust construction, it can withstand even the toughest conditions. Each luggage comes with sturdy adjustable handles and 360° rotating wheels. Additionally, the bags' integrated TSA-approved locks make it simple to protect your items. Victorinox is a luggage brand that resonates with security and durability. *victorinox.com*

BEST CAR FOR ROAD TRIPS

Hyundai CRETA

Hyundai CRETA made its debut in 2015 and has since dominated the SUV market. In its most recent accomplishment, Hyundai CRETA has established itself as one of the market's most versatile vehicles. Offering three engines and five transmission options coupled with plush interiors and extensive features like paddle shifters, voice-enabled smart panoramic sunroof, the car comes as a complete package. It also has features like follow-me-home headlamps and electric parking brakes with auto hold that are designed for enhanced safety. In a nutshell, the Hyundai CRETA with a 1.4-litre turbocharged engine is a readers' favourite in the compact SUV class that combines performance, comfort, and driving satisfaction. *hyundai.com*

BEST ELECTRIC CAR

Volvo XC40 Recharge

The Volvo XC40 Recharge is an eco-friendly SUV with good mobility owing to its 402 horsepower and the quick torque delivery of two electric motors. Despite having an electric powertrain, the XC40 Recharge is every bit as functional and well-thought-out, with its wide luggage capacity, ingenious storage cubbies, classy appearance and feel. Available in five colours, the vehicle comes equipped with a variety of safety and convenience features, including a mode for semi-autonomous driving. With zero tailpipe emissions, you can take the vehicle for a spin and enjoy the comfort of one pedal drive and smooth acceleration. The XC40 Recharge shows its commitment towards a responsible future by using sustainable materials. *volvocars.com*

BEST PHONE CAMERA

vivo

One of the key aspects of the smartphone market is the camera. This fact has been acknowledged by vivo, who also made it the brand's unique selling proposition, making it the winner of this award. The phones offer great camera module with numerous cameras and great specifications, regardless of whether it's a flagship model or a mid-range phone. The vivo X80 pro, for instance, comes with a quad camera that is co-engineered with ZEISS–the German lens manufacturer. The ZEISS lens helps in reducing glare and enhances light transmission for better pictures in all lighting conditions. *vivo.com*

Apple

In the world of mobile phone photography and filmmaking, Apple iPhone has revolutionised the game. Apple has often dedicated the iPhone's marketing campaigns to photographers and filmmakers showcasing all the camera features included in the device. Apple's flagship offering is the iPhone 14 Pro max featuring a primary 48-megapixel camera, a telephoto, and an ultra-wide lens. Aided with the latest A16 bionic chip that helps in image and video processing, it has a built-in optical image stabilisation that helps in gathering more light and shorter shutter time lag during low light photography. With features like dual camera system, photonic engine, TrueDepth front camera, Apple iPhones add incredible colour and details to the images. *apple.com*

BEST BEAUTY TRAVEL KIT

The Body Shop

The Body Shop creates beauty products from sustainably sourced ingredients from all around the world. The brand has a wide range of beauty essentials, including bath products, fragrances, make-up, haircare, face and body care. Offering all the beauty products in miniature sizes, The Body Shop has your skincare covered for travel without taking your luggage space, think travel-sized SPF moisturisers, shower gels, hand creams, and face masks. Besides its amazing beauty products The Body Shop is also a purpose-driven brand that empowers small communities and encourages body diversity. *thebodyshop.in*

Forest Essentials

Forest Essentials is an authentic, traditional skincare brand with roots in the age-old art of Ayurveda. Known as a pioneer of luxurious Ayurveda, it has now evolved into an iconic Indian beauty brand, fusing the ancient Ayurvedic beauty practices with a chic, contemporary aesthetic and emphasis on effectiveness, sensory experience, and pleasure of use. It offers essentials for face, body, and hair in travel-sized containers, assuring comfort and convenience when packing. *forestessentialsindia.com*

BEST PORTABLE SPEAKER

boAt

Take your music everywhere you go! The boAt portable speakers can be your trusted companion whether you're at home, on the beach, or on a hike thanks to its IPX technology for sweat and water resistance. The speakers are ergonomically designed while still being robust to fit any setting or mood. boAt portable speakers are the ideal bluetooth speakers for outdoor activities because of their long-lasting batteries. And with its simple access controls, picking music at all times becomes effortless. In addition to optimal wireless connectivity and stunning sound, the latest bluetooth technology in boAt speakers are equipped with integrated smart controls and hands-free communication. *boat-lifestyle.com*

TRAVEL+ LEISURE

INDIA'S BEST AWARDS 2022

On November 16, 2022, the best in the Indian travel and hospitality scene gathered at Nandiya Gardens, ITC Maurya in New Delhi for the 11th edition of **India's Best Awards** by *Travel + Leisure India and South Asia*. This year, IBA celebrated and felicitated the best in travel, hospitality, and for the first time, lifestyle, from India and across the world. The winners were chosen by the readers through online voting. There were also 11 special award categories—T+L Champions, which felicitated individuals who are creating positive change in their respective fields that are directly or indirectly related to travel. These winners were decided by T+L's Editorial Board. The star-studded guest list included fashion luminaries like Rahul Mishra, Rohit Gandhi & Rahul Khanna, Varun Bahl, Shivan & Narresh, Ujjawal Dubey, Alpana Mittal and Pranav Kirti. Art connoisseur Shalini Passi, model Sonalika Sahay, TV presenter and producer Ambika Anand, author and photographer Latika Nath, restaurateur Zorawar Kalra, chef Suvir Saran, His Excellency Laszlo Makk, Ung Sean, Slobodan Uzunov, Dilshod Akhatov; commisioner of Income Tax Meenakshi Singh, principal commissioner of Income Tax Rupinder Brar, consul general of Union of Comoros KL Ganju, and high commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to India, His Excellency Ibrahim Shaheeb also attended the event.

Hosts for the evening, Sayani Gupta and Saqib Saleem.

Björn Rettig, CEO BurdaLuxury (Asia & India).

Directors of The Belgadia Palace and T+L Champions of Community Tourism, Mrinalika and Akshita Bhanj Deo.

SAZ, a trio of Rajasthani folk musicians from Jodhpur RIFF, was the opening act of the night.

Maharawal Chaitanya Raj Singh, 44th king of Jaisalmer, at the event.

Celebration Partners

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RESPONSIBLE LUXURY

Team Accor strikes a pose with Puneet Dhawan, senior vice president operations, Accor India & South Asia.

Anupam Dasgupta, general manager; Anuraag Bhatnagar, chief operating officer; Anjali Mehra, chief brand officer and senior VP marketing; and Shridhar Nair, vice president operations, The Leela Palaces, Hotels and Resorts receive the award for Best Hotel Group in India.

From left: Patric Omieno, Kenyan diplomat; Gaurav Gupta, charter president, Lion Club; HE Dilshod Akhatov, ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to India; and HE Ibrahim Shaheeb, high commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to India.

Rajesh Namby receives Best Service in a Hotel award on behalf of Accor.

Ambika Anand and KL Ganju, consul general, Union of Comoros, present the award for Best Business Hotel to Sonica Malhotra, joint MD, MBD Group Parmeet Singh Nayar, VP operations and GM hospitality, MBD Group.

Trident Hotels bags the award for Best Hotel Group.

Silki Sehgal receives Editor's Choice award for Best Luxury Resort from chef Suvir Saran and designer Ujjawal Dubey on behalf of The Oberoi Rajvilas, Jaipur.

Shalini Passi and HE Slobodan Uzunov, ambassador of North Macedonia present the Best Eco Retreat Award to Geetika Sharma and Aiman Akhtar from Ananda In the Himalayas, Uttarakhand.

Simmi Sood, director PR & marketing and Ashwani Kumar Goela, area general manager, Delhi NCR, Radisson Hotel Group, South Asia receive the award for Best Business Hotel, on behalf of Radisson Blu Plaza Delhi Airport.

Art connoisseur Shalini Passi at the event.

Björn Rettig and Aindrila Mitra present the T+L Champion of Brand India-Design award to designer Raghavendra Rathore.

Rupinder Brar & HE Dilshod Akhatov present the Best Hotel Brand For Service Excellence award to Silki Sehgal from Oberoi Hotels & Resorts.

Amanpreet Bajaj, GM of Airbnb India & SEA!HKTW; Prasidha Menon, Communications Lead, Airbnb India & SEA; and Sahiba Marwaha, communications specialist, Airbnb India receive the award for Best Luxury Homestay from Alpana Mittal and His Excellency Laszlo Makk, Embassy of Hungary in India.

Bhavna Mehta, head cluster PR - Taj Delhi-NCR receives Best Hotel Loyalty Programme award for NeuPass.

Ronan P Fearon, GM of JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resort & Spa receives Best Leisure Hotel and Resort award.

From left: Amarjit K Bhatia, senior regional manager (North) - Travel; Sushmita Gupta, director sales & brand solutions, Travel; Anil Chaddha, chief executive of ITC Hotels; Aindrila Mitra, editor-in-chief of *Travel+Leisure India & South Asia*; and Richa Sharma from ITC Hotels.

Akshita and Mrinalika Bhan Deo receive T+L Champion award for Community Tourism.

Chief executive of ITC Hotels Anil Chaddha receives Best Luxury Hotel Chain award for ITC Hotels.

Sascha Lenz, GM of Park Hyatt Chennai receives the award for Best Business Hotel.

Amit Kumar, GM of Sheraton Grand Chennai Resort & Spa, Mahabalipuram receives the award for Best Leisure Hotel and Resort.

T+L Champion for Women Empowerment, Princess Gauravi Kumari.

Designer Alpana Mittal and HE Laszlo Makk, present the Best Wellness Resort award to Shweta Mehrotra, tute consult, Amal Tamara.

Debarati Bose from Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel receives Best Convention Centre in a Hotel award.

Parinita Samanta, director of marketing & communication, and Pavan Kumar, director of sales & marketing, Pullman & Novotel New Delhi Aerocity receive the Editor's Choice award for Best Luxury Business Hotel.

Aarti Mathew from MSL India receives the Best City award on behalf of Dubai Tourism.

Gaurav Sinha, hotel manager and Ananya Banerjee, marketing & communication manager receive Best Luxury Business Hotel for JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru.

Vinayak Mhatre, EAM Events, The St. Regis Mumbai and Hitesh Sangwan, director of food & beverage, The St. Regis Mumbai receive the award for Best Hotel for Weddings.

Welcomhotel by ITC Hotels, Shimla wins the award for Best Tier Two Hotel.

Abhimanyu Singh Lodha, GM and Nikita Chopra, director of PR and marketing, The Lodhi, New Delhi receive the award for Best Luxury Hotel.

Kusha Kapila, T+L Champion for Body Positivity strikes a pose in the Hatta photo booth.

Srijan Vadhera, general manager of Conrad Bengaluru receives the award for Best Luxury Business Hotel.

Fatima Abbas receives the award for Best Family Hotel on behalf of Trident, Udaipur.

Editor-in-chief Aindrila Mitra with SAZ trio, musician Rhys Sebastian, and festival director of Jodhpur RIFF Divya Bhatia (far right).

Rajesh Namby, general manager of Raffles Udaipur receives Best Luxury Hotel award from Suvir Saran and Ujjawal Dubey.

Rahul Panwar, GM of Grand Mercure Gandhinagar GIFT City receives the Best Tier Two Hotel award.

Neerja Bhatia, VP, Indian subcontinent, Etihad Airways receives the Editor's Choice award for Best International Airline for Sustainability Efforts.

Saadhvi Mehra receives Best Wellness Resort award for JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa from Rahul Mishra and Divya Mishra.

Raymond LIM from Singapore Tourism receives the Editor's Choice award for Best City.

Ritu Sharma from Switzerland Tourism receives the Best Country award from designer Pranav Kirti.

Ajeet Pal Singh, director of event sales; Priya Nair, associate director of celebrations; and Amiya Mehta, director of sales and marketing of Andaz Delhi receive the award for Best Hotel for Weddings in the domestic category.

Manuj Sawhney, director of operations, Hyatt Regency Hotel & Residences receives the award for Best Bleisure Hotel.

Parishit Rathore of Aramness Gir National Park receives the award for Best Eco Retreat.

Varun Mehrotra, director of sales & marketing Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre receives the Best Convention Centre in a Hotel award.

Anjali Mehra and Shridhar Nair receive the award for Best Family Hotel on behalf of Leela Palace Jaipur.

Aindrila Mitra and Björn Rettig present the T+L Champion award for Body Positivity to influencer Kusha Kapila.

Damcho Rinzin and Carissa Nimah receive the Best Emerging Destination award for Bhutan from Ajeet Bajaj, Padma Shree awardee and T+L A-List member.

Gaurav Mishra, GM of marketing & communications, Lalit Suri Hospitality Group receives Best Heritage Hotel award for The LaLiT Grand Palace Srinagar.

Sheetal Munshaw, director Atout France, India receives Editor's Choice award for Best Culinary Destination on behalf of France tourism.

Abhinav Mehra, assistant director of sales and Joyjit Chakravorty, GM of Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket receive award for Best Bleisure Hotel.

Daleep Singh, deputy director of Rajasthan Tourism Board receives the Best State award from Rahul Khanna, Rohit Gandhi, and Sonalika Sahay.

Harkaran Singh, general manager of Hyatt Regency, Dehradun receives the Best New Hotel award.

Hina Mehta, trade marketing manager, receives the Editor's Choice award for Best Beach Destination on behalf of Queensland, Australia.

Sahil Wasudev, head of marketing & communication, Atmantan Wellness Centre Pune receives the award for Best Wellness Resort in domestic category.

Best Hotel Loyalty Programme in domestic category was bagged by Club ITC.

Madhu Pai, marketing & PR manager of Australia Tourism receives award for Best Family Destination.

Rajeev Nangia, India director, Monaco Government Tourist Bureau receives the Best Romantic Destination award on behalf of Visit Monaco.

Keenan Mckenzie, general manager, ITC Narmada, ITC Ltd, Hotels Division receives the award for Best New Hotel.

Keenan Mckenzie, general manager, ITC Narmada, ITC Ltd, Hotels Division receives the Editor's Choice award for Best Hotel for Weddings on behalf of ITC Grand Goa.

Hilton wins the award for Best Service in a Hotel.

Aman Nath, chairman of Neemrana Hotels receives the Best Heritage Hotel award for Neemrana Fort-Palace.

Deveekaa Nijhawan receives the Best Family Destination award on behalf of Qatar.

Best Boutique Experiential Hotel award was bagged by Aman-i-Khas, Ranthambore.

Indu Bhardwaj of T+L India with Ananya Banerjee from JW Marriott Hotel Bengaluru.

Mrinalika Bhanj Deo and Maharawal Chaitanya Raj Singh with editor-in-chief Aindrila Mitra.

Ranjeet Dhar, corporate associate director PR & marketing, The Khyber Corporate Office; Meenakshi Sachdev Varma; and Anuradha Kapoor (second from right), Soulmedia receive the award for Best Family Hotel on behalf of The Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa.

Ritika Verma, senior marketing and PR manager and Antara Kundu, GM Asia South, marketing, brand & customer acquisition, The Body Shop receive the award for Best Beauty Travel Kit.

Editor's Choice award for Best Bleisure Hotel was bagged by The Oberoi, Mumbai.

High commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to India, HE Ibrahim Shaheeb receives the award for Best Romantic Destination.

Puneet Kahlon receives the Best Beach Destination award on behalf of Indonesia.

Influencer Riaan George with Richa Sharma, head of corporate communications & PR, ITC Hotels.

Ishika Laul, marketing manager - Tarvel Hub and Aindrila Mitra with host Saqib Saleem.

Aticha Supichayangkul receives the Best Leisure Hotel award for Kimpton Maa-Lai Bangkok.

Spain wins the award for Best Culinary Destination.

Pinki Arora and Vachirachai Sirisumpan, director TAT New Delhi Office receive Best Wedding Destination award on behalf of Thailand Tourism.

Moumita Paul receives the Best Business Hotel award for Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre at CentralWorld.

Designer duo Shivan & Narresh present the Editor's Choice award for Best Hotel for Weddings to the representative of JW Marriott Khao Lak Resort & Spa.

Khaja Nazimuddeen receives the award for Best International Airport on behalf of Singapore Changi Airport.

Anunay Sood wins the T+L Champion award for Travel Photography.

Nikhil, country manager of DCT Abu Dhabi India office receives the award on behalf of Abu Dhabi for Best Cultural Destination.

Yusuke Yamamoto, executive director; Kana Murakoshi, director; and Ujwal Sood, head of marketing & PR - JNTO receives the Best Cultural Destination award for Japan.

Pareina Thapar, co-founder, Longform and Pooja Wadhwa of Avant Garde India receive the award for Best Shopping Destination on behalf of Bicester Village, London.

J.Jayakumar, assistant director of tourism, Tamil Nadu Tourism receives the award for Best Spiritual Destination.

Climate activist Aakash Ranison wins T+L Champion award for Sustainable Travel.

Lakshmi Hariharan of Indiva Marketing receives the award for Atlantis, The Palm for Best Luxury Hotel.

Emirates wins Best International Airline.

Team of ALL - Accor Live Limitless programme receives the award for Best Hotel Loyalty Programme.

Savino Leone, general manager, Jumeirah at Saadiyat Island Resort Abu Dhabi receives the award for Best Hotel for Weddings.

From left: Jasdeep Gujral, Captain Yashima Singh, Vinod Kannan, Rashmi Soni, and Deepti Sampat of Vistara-Tata SIA Airlines Ltd receive the award for Best Domestic Airline from Meenakshi Singh.

Debraj Sengupta, CMO, brand & country head of Victorinox receives the award for Best Luggage Brand.

Manish Tolani, VP commercial Hilton India; Srijan Wadhera, GM Conrad Bengaluru; and Joyjit Chakravorty, GM Hilton Garden Inn New Delhi/Saket receive the award for Best International Hotel Group on behalf of Hilton.

Designer Amit Aggarwal wins T+L Champion award for Sustainable Fashion.

Saadhvi Mehra receives the Editor's Choice award for Best Hotel Loyalty Programme on behalf of Marriott Bonvoy.

Soneva Jani Maldives wins the Editor's Choice award for Best Luxury Hotel.

Jyoti Malhotra, MD of Volvo Car India and Anuj Somani, marketing communications of Volvo Car India receive the award for Best Electric Car on behalf of Volvo XC40.

Sy Yen Chen and Kelvin Kwan receive the Best International Airline award on behalf of Singapore Airlines.

Saadhvi Mehra receives the Best International Hotel Group award for Marriott International.

Prashant Singh Baghel, joint director (Planning) Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board receives the award for Best Wildlife Destination.

AlUla, Saudi Arabia wins the award for Best Emerging Destination.

Vinay Tyagi, head of lounge operations; Salil Kopal, head of sales and marketing; and Pooja Bhondekar, VP operations, Encalm Hospitality Pvt. Ltd receive the award for Best Airport Lounge.

Sheema Vohra, managing director, Sartha Global Marketing, receives the award Best Adventure Destination on behalf of Virginia, USA.

Kerala wins the award for Best Wedding Destination in the domestic category.

Team *Travel+Leisure India & South Asia* after a successful evening.